

for Caldwell

THOUGHTS

ON THE

STUDY OF THE GREEK AND LATIN LANGUAGES.

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THE remarks in this and two succeeding essays were suggested on reading a pamphlet, entitled "Reports on the Course of Instruction in Yale College, by a Committee of the Corporation and the Academical Faculty." It is a pamphlet, calculated, for sundry reasons, to make no common impression, wherever it is read. It is from the pen of scholars, is written with ability, and, from having been long engaged in the business of "Instruction," most of those concerned in the authorship of it have a fair claim to be deemed qualified judges of the subject of which it treats. Hence, on most points embraced in their "Reports," we consider the sentiments of the Committee correct, their illustrations satisfactory, and their reasonings conclusive. And such we presume is the general opinion.

On one point, however, we are *not* satisfied; and it is that on which the Committee appear to have bestowed most attention, and for the decision of which, in conformity to their own views, they were probably most solicitous. We allude to the *necessity* of a knowledge of Greek and Latin, as an *element of a liberal education*. Is it true, that that element is *indispensable*; and that no form or degree of education is liberal *without it*? May not an individual, without being versed in the dead languages, be so educated, as to be competent to the highest and most perfect achievements in science, literature, and the arts, as well as in professional life?

These are questions of deep concern to the interests of society, education being the only means of fully developing the human faculties, and conferring on man the entire perfection, of which he is susceptible. The Committee have answered the first of them *affirmatively*, and the last, of course, in *the negative*. They have pronounced an acquaintance with Greek and Roman literature *essential* in the constitution of a liberal education.

Before offering any strictures on this decision, we shall simply remark, that we are friendly to the cultivation of ancient literature, under proper restrictions. We disclaim all connection and sympathy with that class of innovators, that would "drive the ploughshare of destruction" through *all* our academies and colleges, and uproot in

them every remnant of the learned languages. Though advocates of a temperate and judicious reform on this subject, we deprecate revolution. Indeed, such are the evils inseparable from revolution, during its progress, that it should never be attempted in any thing of moment, except as the result of necessity, or under a prospect deemed infallible of great improvement. We shall only add, that we have never witnessed what we considered an unbiassed discussion of the topic before us. Notwithstanding our belief, that the learned Committee, whose "Reports" we are about to examine, endeavored to divest themselves of prepossession and prejudice, and to discover and communicate truth, on the subject of their deliberation, we are compelled to question their ability to do so. In saying this, we intend neither an impeachment of their integrity, nor a disparagement of their understanding. In the former, we repose entire confidence, and have already acknowledged the latter to be of a respectable order. We simply mean, that men educated, employed, and habituated from their youth, to think, as they have been, must have had, from the well-known laws of the human mind, a bias and friendliness of feeling, *apart from their judgement*, in favor of the study of Greek and Latin. To have felt otherwise—we mean, to have felt *impartially*, would have been unnatural, and, perhaps we might add, *unamiable*—a susceptibility of attachment to familiar objects and customary pursuits, being one of the attractive features of the human character. Besides; not to have decided as they did, would have been a censure on themselves and their profession; some of them, we believe, being concerned in teaching the classics, and all of them sanctioning that course of instruction. And self-condemnation, always an unwelcome task, is much increased in its difficulty and repulsiveness, by having to grapple with pride of opinion, personal interest, and confirmed habit.

One more preliminary, and we shall commence our discussion. What are we to understand by a *liberal education*? Unless this question be previously solved, reasoning on the subject can be of no avail. It is fortunate, therefore, that the committee have given *their* solution of it in the following sentence:—

"By a liberal education, it is believed, has been generally understood, such a course of discipline in the arts and sciences, as is best calculated, at the same time, both to strengthen and enlarge the faculties of the mind, and to familiarize it with the leading principles of the great objects of human investigation and knowledge."

To this solution we offer no other objection, than that it is not sufficiently full. The word *all* should have been inserted before "faculties." A liberal education, then, we would define, that course of instruction, which is best calculated to prepare the mind, by expanding and invigorating *all* its faculties, for the highest achievements, of which it is capable, in science and letters, as well as in the learned professions and the arts. For, although it is true, as the committee allege, that a liberal is distinct from a professional education, it is equally so, that the latter should always include the former, and is defective without it.

It being conceded, then, that a liberal education consists in a competent cultivation of *all the faculties* of the mind, it must be also conceded, that whatever form of education thus cultivates them *is liberal*.

The question may therefore be put, and the committee have an interest in answering it, What faculty, or what number of faculties are disciplined and strengthened by the study of Greek and Latin, which cannot be as highly disciplined and strengthened without it? Greek and Latin are but languages. The study of them alone, therefore, is far from invigorating *every* faculty of the mind. When pursued as it usually is, it invigorates only the faculty of language. It in no degree strengthens, or in any way improves either the reflecting faculties, or the general powers of perception and judgement. It adds nothing to the capacity of the mind to form ideas of number, quantity, weight, figure, size, duration, color, place, tune, or beauty. Nor has it any bearing on comparison, reasoning, wit, or imitation. Yet these are all ideas and operations, conceived and performed by distinct primitive faculties, which education is intended to train and strengthen. We repeat, that the study of language, cultivates alone the faculty of language; and that can be cultivated as *certainly*, and we believe as well, by the study,—we mean the thorough study,—of modern as of ancient languages. This will be made to appear more fully hereafter. But we are running ahead of our inquiry; we are advancing some of our own views, before examining those contained in the pamphlet.

The Committee have assigned their reasons for deciding, that the study of the ancient classics is an indispensable constituent of a liberal education. If those reasons are conclusive, the controversy is settled, and any further agitation of it would be worse than nugatory; it would be a waste of time. If, on the contrary, the reasons are invalid, the question is still open, and invites to a stricter examination of the subject of it. Nor ought the invitation to be declined, relating, as it does, to matters of deep and general concern. Our first business, therefore, is to endeavor to test the soundness and sufficiency of some of the positions, which the "Reports" maintain.

The Committee first attempt to draw a parallel between the objections made by some persons to the study of mathematics, and those made to the study of Greek and Latin; and, having shown satisfactorily the invalidity of the former objections, they content themselves with the inference that the latter are equally invalid. In this effort, however, to maintain themselves, they have failed. Arguments founded on analogy should be advanced with caution. They are not philosophical. To illustrate is all they can do. Proof is beyond their sphere. In most instances, they do more harm than good, unless they are sustained by something solid, and direct to the point. In the present case, moreover, we deem the analogy defective. The attempt to show that there is an equal necessity for studying the ancient classics and mathematics, we consider a failure. A knowledge of mathematics, if not essential, is highly useful, in almost every department of life.* The power of man is greatly augmented by it, and his general effi-

* We do not mean to contend that every candidate for a liberal education ought to be compelled to study mathematics, to any great extent. Some knowledge of the principles of the science, and their application, he ought to acquire; and to this attainment every one is competent. But those alone who have the faculty of Number in sufficient strength, can attain a thorough knowledge of mathematics. Nor should the attainment be exacted of any others. A practice the contrary of this is unjustifiable, because it leads to an unprofitable consumption of time. Of every other study, the same is true. No one should be constrained to pursue it, unless he possesses a faculty for it. A strict observance of this rule would be an important improvement in the education of youth.

ciency in the same degree improved. It is an important element of practical science, and is not only indispensable in public and weighty projects, but facilitates and renders more complete the transaction of many private and domestic affairs. Its influence, like that of the sun and the atmosphere, is felt every where, without being always referred to its proper source. Were it necessary to illustrate or prove this, facts suited to either purpose could be collected abundantly from every quarter. Indeed, an extinction of the knowledge of mathematics, would not only arrest the progress of improvement, and render useless most improvements already made; it would reduce society to an infantile condition. Every man actively engaged in agriculture, commerce, or the arts, does many things on mathematical principles, whether he be educated in the science or not. Several other sciences, moreover, as well as most of the arts, are dependent on mathematics, if not for their existence, at least for the degrees of perfection they have attained.

As respects a knowledge of Greek and Latin, the case is different. To say the least, its usefulness in the *common affairs* of life, whether public or private, on a large scale or a small one, is very limited. Were we to deny it altogether, it is doubtful whether we could be convicted of error. Classical knowledge belongs to literature, and appears to us to have no necessary connexion with practical science. As a mere attainment in language, it deals in words and names, not in substantial ideas and things. True, it facilitates the making of additions, when required, to scientific nomenclature. Such additions, however, *might* be made without it, though not, perhaps, so conveniently—certainly not so learnedly. But no one will contend, that it contributes, in the slightest degree, to widen the boundaries of science, by leading either to further discoveries in the laws of nature, or to new and useful applications of those already made. Some of the most distinguished discoverers, inventors, and improvers, the world has produced, have been strangers to Grecian and Roman literature. In proof of this, many well-known names might be cited.* Of a knowledge of mathematics, it need scarcely be said, that the reverse of this is true. Science and the arts, we repeat, are immeasurably indebted to it, on the score of both discovery and improvement. We reiterate, therefore, our inability to perceive any analogy, at all available in the present case, between the necessity of it, and a knowledge of the ancient classics, constituting an element of a liberal education. Every enlightened people is, and always has been, indebted to mathematics for many of their means of prosperity and power. But nations and empires have been prosperous and powerful, without any aid from

* It would not, we believe, be difficult to show, that of the most illustrious discoverers, inventors, and improvers in science and the arts, a large majority have been ignorant of Greek and Latin. For this, there seems to be a good reason. Self-taught men are untrammelled by authority. They think for themselves, and take nature for their guide; whereas, the educated, being much under the influence of what they have learned in colleges, and other seats of learning, *think as they have been taught*, and are guided by example. Under these circumstances, the former can scarcely fail to take a lead, in the work of general innovation and improvement. The remedy for this evil in our colleges and universities is obvious and easy. Young men should be instructed *reasonably*, not *dogmatically*, or *authoritatively*. They should be taught independence of mind, to study nature as well as books, and, on every subject, to examine strictly, believe cautiously, and think for themselves. The following are a few, out of many that might be named, of eminent discoverers, inventors, and improvers, who had no knowledge of Greek or Latin: Franklin, Rittenhouse, Watt, Arkwright, Hutton, Hubbart, Brindley, Branaah, Leslie, Stevenson, Perkins, and Fulton. To these, dozens of others might be added—among them, Buffon, Davy, and Cuvier.

Greek or Latin. From reasoning by analogy, the Committee proceed to another ground of argument, which we think no better—that of *authority and fashion*.

“In the British islands, (say they) in France, Germany, Italy, and, indeed, in every country of Europe in which literature has acquired distinction and importance, the Greek and Roman classics constitute an *essential* part of a liberal education.”

This is begging the question ; or rather, assuming positively the right to decide it, by the weight of opinion. The allegation made is true, only by construction—true, on the ground of human authority, but not, therefore, necessarily so, under the sanction of reason. In the countries mentioned in the extract, custom of long standing has established the *belief*, that “the Greek and Roman classics constitute an essential part of a liberal education.” This belief, however, does not form a fact. No mere belief does so. If it did, fact and absurdity would be often identical.

That at the time of the Revival of Letters, and for centuries afterwards, an acquaintance with the “Greek and Roman classics constituted an essential part of a liberal education,” is not denied. The reason is obvious. At that period, those works were, in Europe and most parts of Asia, the depositaries of almost all recorded knowledge. But they are not so now. The amount of knowledge, which they lock up, at present, from the mere reader of modern languages, is extremely small ; and, we may safely add, of little use. All the important information they contain, has been, long since, translated into other tongues. Hence they are no longer consulted as oracles of science. Had the Committee, therefore, pronounced a knowledge of them a *fashionable or conventional*, instead of an “*essential*,” part of a liberal education, the term would have been more appropriate. If mere authority be waved, the propriety of the epithet, in the present condition of the world, is more than doubtful. But that authority is, in many cases, not only a fallacious, but a dangerous, basis of education, may be easily shown. Has not a belief in the infallibility of the Pope, in the performance of miracles by the relics of saints, and in the divine right of kings to trample on their subjects, been inculcated by authority, as an element of education ? And, in some parts of Europe, is it not so inculcated still ? Has there not been a period, when, had teachers refused to implant these notions in the minds of their pupils, they would have been deemed heretical, and deprived of their offices, if not of their lives ? The reply to these questions must be affirmative. Were we inclined to press this matter further, we might add, that the time was, when no person but a clergyman was deemed sufficiently pure and holy to be at the head of a college or a university, because no other could procure for it the favor of Heaven ; and the time also was, when no young man’s education was esteemed liberal and complete, though he might be intended for holy orders, unless it included the art of defence. In fact, there is scarcely an error or an absurdity in discipline, so gross and striking, as not to have found its advocacy in the same source. It is not perceived, then, in what way the Committee have strengthened their cause, by a reference to fashion, or human authority. We shall appeal, hereafter, to a higher tribunal, that of Nature. The Committee employ another argument, the sound-

ness of which we think equally doubtful. We shall give it in their own words:—

“The literature of every country of Europe is founded, more or less, on classical literature, and receives *from this source its most important illustrations.*”

Admitting this to be true of the literature of France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal, and also of modern Greece as far as she has a literature, is it so of that of any other European country? Is it true of Great-Britain, Holland, Germany, Prussia, Russia, or any other northern nation? or, is it true of the United States? Is the literature of these latter countries founded on that of ancient Greece, or Rome? and is it dependent on “that source for its most important illustrations?” The Committee would hazard much, in replying affirmatively to this question. In plain terms, if we comprehend their meaning in the paragraph quoted, the reply could not be sustained. The constitution of the English language, and every thing fundamental that belongs to it, rest much more on the Saxon, than on either the Greek or Latin, or on both united. And the Russian, and the German in all its dialects, are original tongues; no more dependent on Greek or Latin, than the latter are on them. That many English writers have modeled their style and manner after those of the writers of Greece and Rome, is true. But, that the most pure and classical writers of the English language have done so, is not true. English literature has a character of its own, very distinct from that of either Greek or Roman literature. It cannot conform to both of them, they being widely different from each other. The truth is, that, when pure, it conforms to neither. This is proved by the prose works of Dryden, Bolingbroke, Swift, Addison, Taylor, Goldsmith, Scott, and other great masters of English style. Those compositions, and many others that might be referred to, derive nothing in manner or illustration from ancient literature, and but little in words. They are written chiefly in Saxon-English. We allude especially to the structure and spirit of the composition. Some of the most tasteless works in our language are modeled after the ancients. How can it be otherwise? An effort is made in them to assimilate incongruous things. Attempts, moreover, to imitate bespeak inferiority, and contribute to perpetuate it. On that ground, ancient authors have injured many modern ones. No writer will ever be great, unless he aspire to originality, both in manner and matter. He must act according to the constitution of his own mind, not in imitation of the mind of another; for his intellectual stores, he must draw on nature; and, to acquire mental vigor and dexterity, he must exercise regularly, and on suitable subjects, the powers he possesses. But the adorers of the ancients will be the last to do this. Like the adherents to royalty, they will continue to recognize, in the Greeks and Romans, a *divine right* to instruct the moderns.

English literature will never attain the perfection of which it is susceptible, until it shall be cultivated, more than it ever has been, on the ground of the true constitution of the English tongue. Never until then will it be free from trammels; and freedom is essential to perfection in every thing. We deem it fortunate that this sentiment has begun to prevail; and that it has so begun, cannot be doubted. English and American writers, *generally*, are less servile copyists of the

ancients, than they were fifty years ago. And, as nations, their writings have improved. Both in Great-Britain and the United States, more especially in the latter, there are *twenty* good writers now, where there was *one*, at the commencement of our revolutionary war. Yet, in neither country has the devotion to the ancient classics increased in the same ratio. It would be difficult to prove, that, in proportion to numbers, it has increased at all. Nor shall we ever have a truly classical literature of our own, until it shall have been formed out of our own materials, and on the constitution and construction of our own tongue. We might safely add, that when one writer copies or imitates the style and manner of another, he is apt to imitate his sentiments and mode of thinking, also, and to become a copyist and an underling throughout; and such a degree of dependence operates as a blight on the human faculties. That it may be able to act with its entire force, and achieve every thing, of which it is capable, the mind must be free, and must, therefore, do homage to nothing that is human. Aristotle and Plato among the ancients, and Newton and Locke among the moderns, checked originality of thought, and thus did mischief, through the excessive deference paid to them, by their contemporaries and those of after ages. Imitation and the restraint of authority chill the fires and deaden the elasticity of genius, and are fatal to all that is great or new. We do not hesitate to say, then, that, instead of being benefited by the homage once paid by them to ancient compositions, modern writers have improved, both in matter and style, almost in proportion as that homage has abated. As far as our acquaintance with German literature fits us to judge of it, we cannot perceive that it is any more "founded on classical literature," than the English. It appears to us to be very independent, and to have a distinct constitution and character of its own. To crowd a composition with what are called classical illustrations and allusions, is now deemed a mark of pedantry, rather than of good taste; to which might be added, that it is also a mark of a barren mind. The rich are not compelled to borrow; nor is the scholar, who is sufficiently versed in the book of nature, obliged to rely for his illustrations on the literature of the ancients.

The Committee make a further effort to establish, *by analogy*, the high claim of an acquaintance with Greek and Latin to enter as an element into a liberal education. The subjects of their analogy are architecture and sculpture. Those arts are stated to have been carried to such perfection in Greece, that their products are still unrivaled, and constitute the best models for modern imitation. True; as relates to sculpture, the Committee disclaim being advocates of *imitation*. To us, however, they seem to disclaim it only *in words*, while *in principle* they recommend it. When a modern statuary places an ancient bust or statue before him, and works *by* it or *after* it, to improve himself as an artist, we know of no other name, which suits him so well, as that of *imitator*. His object is not to *avoid faults* in the statue; because he always selects the most perfect specimen. If, then, he does not intend to imitate—to assimilate his work in some way to the model in his presence, why does he look on it as an exemplar? Why does he not copy directly from nature, the true inspirer of genius, and the finished pattern of all elegance and all excellence? By doing so,

and depending alone on her, in conforming to her works, he would take the rank of an original. But as long as he relies for his improvement on human productions, he is a copyist. Every great artist has a *beau ideal* in his mind, the creation of his own genius; but all the elements of it are derived from nature. He only unites and fashions them to his taste; and, in his attempts to attain perfection, he works after the image he has thus created. His effort is to equal that, not to equal or surpass a pattern set by any other artist, either ancient or modern. After whose models did Phidias or Praxiteles work; or by what artist's productions did they improve themselves? The answer is plain. They worked after no models but those of nature, and deigned to imitate no productions but hers—and hence their works bestowed immortality on them. It is believed that the ancient artists, painters, as well as sculptors, owed their excellence chiefly to their being *originals*. Nor could they be otherwise; because they had no highly finished works of preceding artists to imitate. Were the moderns to follow their examples of *originality*, instead of copying their works, they might equal them in the perfection of the art; but they will never do it on any other ground. It appears to us, that the chief, if not the only advantage, which the works of ancient artists can bestow on modern ones, is on the ground of competition and rivalry. They may excite in them a higher ambition to excel, than they would otherwise feel; and there, we apprehend, the true benefit ends. Our allusion is to artists of a high order. That inferior ones may improve their humble performances by imitation, is not denied. They are intended and fit only to follow in the wake of superior men. They are not, therefore, embraced in the present discussion. We are treating of artists qualified to be *originals*; and they are necessarily injured by imitation.

Be these things, however, as they may, we say of this analogy, as we did of the last, that it *proves* nothing, because it *is* an analogy—and not, we think, a very close one. In the reasoning founded on it by the Committee, the premises and the conclusion do not appear to us, to belong of right to the same syllogism. Modern architecture, say the Committee, has been improved by ancient architecture, and modern sculpture by ancient sculpture. But the Greeks and Romans were the great masters in these arts. Therefore, modern literature is improved by ancient literature, in which the same people were also masters. We confess our inability to perceive either the force or fairness of the inference.

There is yet another ground, on which the analogy of the Committee appears to us to have failed. Sculpture is a direct imitation of something in nature. The product, therefore, of the ancient and of the modern sculptor, when imitating the same object,—say, the human figure,—must be so much alike, that the latter, when possessed of but moderate abilities, *may*, perhaps, improve his style, by working after the model left by the former. He is still indirectly imitating nature, when he is imitating a well-executed image of her. But language, though founded in nature, resembles none of her immediate works. It is a creation entirely artificial; and, as products of art, the English, Latin, and Greek languages are, in their present condition, so dissimilar to each other, that it is difficult to conceive, how the former can be,

in any way, improved, by an attempt to model it after either of the latter. That it must be injured by it, seems, on principle, the more probable result; and experience, we think, sustains the opinion.

"But, (say the Committee) the study of the classics is useful, not only as it lays the *foundation of a correct taste*, and furnishes the student with *those elementary ideas*, which are found in the literature of modern times, and which he *no where so well acquires as in their original sources*—but also as the study itself *forms the most effectual discipline of the mental faculties.*" * * * * "Every faculty of the mind is employed; not only the *memory, judgement, and reasoning powers*, but the *taste and fancy* are occupied and improved."

The matter of this extract brings us into a more serious conflict with the Committee, than that of either of the preceding ones. We are compelled to call in question the soundness of the whole of it. We cannot admit that "the study of the classics lays the foundation of a correct taste." Wherever that "*foundation*" exists, it is not the creation of any course of discipline. It is the gift of *nature*—laid in the original constitution of the mind. Education improves it, but does not and cannot *produce* it. There are many minds, some of whose powers are active and vigorous, in which no system of training can form a correct taste. Whatever they do is disjointed and out of shape. Yet they may be thoroughly imbued with Greek and Latin. Instances in proof of this are so numerous, that they must be familiar to every accurate observer. The elements of correct taste are as literally bestowed by nature, as the elements of beauty of countenance, or symmetry of figure. They consist in that form of mind, where all the faculties are active, and well-balanced, none of them preponderating much in strength over the others. Where these elements are wanting, no course of discipline can impart them. Nor are we convinced, that, when possessed, they may not be as well cultivated, without Greek and Latin, as with them. Females excel in all sorts of taste, without any knowledge of ancient literature. This point will be more fully considered hereafter.

Notwithstanding an attentive examination of the subject, we find it difficult to discover what the Committee mean by "those elementary ideas, which are found in the literature of modern times, and which the student no where so well acquires, as in their *original sources*." Nature,* not classical literature, we regard as the "*original source*" of all ideas, whether elementary, or of any other kind. We believe, moreover, that all mental philosophers concur with us in opinion. Other sources are but secondary, and derive all the value they possess from their conformity to the original source. But nature is as accessible to the moderns, as she was to the ancients. Had we said that she is much more so, the position could be maintained. For each well-informed student of nature possessed by Greece and Rome, modern nations furnish hundreds, in the same amount of population. Wherefore, then, must the latter depend on the former for "elementary ideas," or any ideas at all, to enrich their literature? Why can

* We mean that impressions made, directly or indirectly, by the works of nature, on the human mind, produce in it all the ideas it possesses. To the production of these impressions, the learned languages contribute but little.

they not draw them from the same fountain, which is so much more liberally opened to the modern than it was to the ancient world? We ought rather to ask, Do they not thus draw them? Are not modern productions generally much richer in the truths of nature, and freer from fiction, than most ancient ones? This question must be answered affirmatively; else all the discoverers and philosophers, who have flourished and written since the Revival of Letters, have lived in vain. We feel justified, then, in calling on the Committee to specify those "elementary ideas," and show them to be of any value, which writers of the present day most readily derive from Greek and Latin. Nor will they find it an easy task to comply with the summons.

We cannot concur in the opinion, that the study of the dead languages "forms the most effectual discipline of the mental faculties"—especially of "judgement and the reasoning powers." On the contrary, we are convinced that it does not. We do not perceive how it disciplines either "reason" or "judgement" at all. Nor do we think it does so. Some of the most thorough-bred Hellenists and Latinists we have seen were eminently defective in reason and judgement. Nor is this an uncommon occurrence. Observation has taught us to believe the reverse. We think it rare to find, in our colleges and elsewhere, that those young men, who judge most correctly, reason most conclusively, compose most elegantly, and debate most eloquently and powerfully, are most perfectly versed in the ancient languages. And if the study of Greek and Latin invigorates the "memory," it is a memory for *words*, not for *ideas* of qualities, objects, events, or *their relations*. And the cultivation of a modern tongue will have the same effect. The reason of all this is obvious. The cultivation of Greek and Latin is but the study of words in one language, and their synonyms or representatives in another. It does not, therefore, and cannot strengthen the memory for any thing but language; and, we repeat, that that form of memory can be strengthened as well by the study of English and French, as of Greek and Latin.

The chief source of error on this topic, is the belief, that memory is a *faculty* of the mind; and that we have but *one* kind of memory; whereas it is but a *function* or *mode of operation* of a faculty. We have, therefore, as many sorts of memory, as the mind possesses of intellectual faculties; each faculty having its own. And as no one primitive faculty can form the ideas, which are the product of another, neither can it remember them—because it never had them. Memory is the power of recalling ideas which were once possessed. The cultivation of the memory belonging to one faculty of the mind, then, does not strengthen the memory belonging to another, any more than the cultivation of hearing strengthens vision, or of smelling, touch. To illustrate this by examples.

The mind possesses one faculty for number, which can perceive and remember nothing but number; another for form or figure, which perceives and remembers nothing but figure; another for size; another for place; another for color; another for time; and another for tune; and each perceives and remembers only the class of ideas proper to itself. In cultivating any one of these faculties, therefore, by exercising it on the objects which especially suit it, its own memory is

strengthened; but no strength is added to the memory of any other faculty.*

The mind possesses also a faculty for language, by the cultivation of which *its* memory is in like manner strengthened; but, as already mentioned, that is only memory for *words*. No new strength is added to the memory for any other class of ideas. Hence the well-known fact, that different individuals excel in different forms of memory. One remembers *numbers* with great tenacity, but forgets a tune, the moment the notes of it have escaped from his ear. Another never forgets a *tune*, after once hearing it, but cannot remember numbers. A third forgets both the tune and the number of times he has heard it, but remembers the *form* of the instrument on which it was played. A fourth forgets the tune, the number, and the figure of the instrument, but has an accurate recollection of the *place* where he heard the tune, and of the *person* who performed it. A fifth, forgetting all these things, remembers the *names* of the tunes, the instrument, and the musician. The latter is well endowed with the faculty of language, by the cultivation of which, its own memory alone is improved—not, we repeat, the memory for any other class of ideas. As soon, therefore, shall a youth perfect himself in the dead languages, by studying arithmetic or mathematics, as strengthen his memory for numbers or

* We might thus enumerate all the intellectual faculties, and show that they are acted on and exercised only, each by objects or agents proper to itself; that each forms and remembers only its own class of ideas; and that, therefore, the cultivation of one of them does not improve *directly* the functions of another. That it may receive strength and become dexterous in action, each one must be exercised in its own line. The faculties of Individuality and Eventuality must be exercised on single objects and events, Comparison chiefly on the relations of analogy, and Causality on those of cause and effect.

Respecting the *animal* and *moral* faculties, the same is true. Each one of them is exercised and strengthened only by its own objects, and in its own way. The proper education of each, therefore, is specific, and contributes nothing directly to the education of another.

It is in the education of the moral faculties, that the teachers of youth are most deficient. They seem to think that they are improving their pupils in morality, when they are merely restraining them from vice. Nothing, however, can be more erroneous. The teaching of morality is as much a *positive* process, as teaching to read and write. The moral faculties, we mean, must be actively exercised, each on its proper object. The faculty of benevolence is strengthened only by the work of benevolence, and the contemplation of kind actions. The faculty of conscientiousness is strengthened by contemplating and doing what is just and right. The faculty of veneration delights in doing homage to superior beings, and derives from the practice its chief improvement. Ideality is exercised and strengthened by beauty and sublimity, and Firmness gains power from scenes of difficulty.

Of the animal faculties the same may be affirmed. Combativeness is strengthened by a familiarity with danger, Acquisitiveness by the pursuit of wealth, and Destructiveness by cruelty and the shedding of blood.

We shall only add, that, so perfectly do the faculties of the mind harmonize with the works of creation, that each finds, abundantly, suitable objects for its own exercise, enjoyment, and increase in strength. Nor will instructors ever be competent to their duty, until they realize this truth, and act in conformity to it.

As relates to the cultivation of the *moral faculties*, no one will contend that that is highly promoted by the study of Greek and Latin. It may, at least, be questioned, whether it is promoted at all. Many have believed the reverse to be true. That some striking examples of morality, especially as respects certain virtues, are exhibited in the ancient classics, is not denied. But the scale of immorality greatly preponderates. The entire scheme of the Greek and Roman mythology is a revolting picture of licentiousness and crime. Jupiter, at once the chief of gods and adulterers. Apollo, the gallant, gay Lothario of heaven and earth. Mars, a blood-thirsty, swaggering bully. Neptune, a blustering boaster, and a flagrant ravisher. Vulcan, a low bred, deformed, ill-tongued ruffian. Bacchus, a sot. Juno, a fierce, vindictive termagant. Minerva, a prude; and most of the other female divinities *no better than they ought to be*.

Of the demi-gods and heroes, not one exhibits an example to be followed. Even the "pious Aeneas, the goddess-born," was an ungrateful seducer, a lawless usurper, and an inexorable murderer.

Nor did the characters of the philosophers of either Greece or Rome approach *immaculacy*. Pericles waging a bloody war, on account of his mistress, Socrates at the feet of Aspasia, and Cato accommodating a friend with his wife, are but sorry samples of morality for modern youth to imitate.

Nor is this all. In Horace, Ovid, Juvenal, Catullus, Anacreon, and other classical writers, are many odes, epistles, satires, and letters, too obscene for young men to read. In fine, if we would strengthen the moral faculties, and preserve their purity, we must exercise them in some other and better way than by the study of Greek and Latin.

quantity, by contracting an acquaintance with the ancient classics. Nor is it perceived in what way *taste* and *fancy* are more effectually exercised and improved by the study of ancient than of modern literature. We are even compelled to believe, that they are not so. Many modern works might be mentioned, which surpass any ancient ones now extant, in imagination and fancy. We know of no Greek or Roman authors equal, in these respects, to Shakspeare, Spencer, or Dante. Certainly none are superior. To come down to our own times, and compare moderns and ancients individually with each other, we think Byron superior in brilliancy to Pindar, and Moore to Anacreon. That they at least equal them, no one, we think, will deny. And, that the moderns referred to are richer in sentiment and thought, than the ancients, will not, we apprehend, be held doubtful. Nor are they inferior in taste, when they choose to exercise it. Yet their works are original—no more founded on or modeled after the works of any of the ancients, than the latter are after them. They are the productions of the peculiar geniuses of their authors, and resemble nothing but themselves.

That it may be further illustrated and confirmed, we repeat a remark already made, that no faculty of the mind, but that of language, is especially disciplined by the study of Greek and Latin. Hence persons, who are deficient in that faculty, make but little progress in this study, however industrious they may be, and though their other faculties may be unusually strong and active. Many striking instances of this are on record; and most persons must have seen some such themselves. Great as were their powers, in other respects, neither Newton nor Swift could acquire any standing in classical scholarship. The reason is plain. They were comparatively defective in the faculty of language. Mere boys, on the contrary, who are highly endowed with it, but whose reason and judgement are immature and weak, make rapid progress in the classics. As relates to that branch of attainment, the maturity of the higher faculties of the mind is of little avail. We once knew a child but six years old, who spoke four different languages; and lads of ten frequently surpass youths of eighteen or twenty, in the ease and speed with which they become acquainted with Greek and Latin. Many persons, who acquire distinction as classical scholars, can never attain a name in science.

Shall we be told, that it is not by learning to construe, parse, and scan the ancient languages, that the faculties of pupils are exercised and strengthened, but by studying their structure and philosophy? We reply, that the number of persons, who study Greek and Latin thus thoroughly, is very small; and, were it otherwise, an equal degree of improvement might be derived from a suitable attention to the structure and philosophy of modern languages. There are reasons, why the case cannot be otherwise. The philosophy, by which we mean the reason and fundamental principles, of all languages is the same. A brief analysis of the subject will prove this.

From their social character and love of information, mankind have an irrepressible desire to communicate to their fellows something respecting themselves, and to learn something respecting others; and words are the chief means, by which these ends are obtained. Language, then, might be defined an invention for expressing, by articulate

sounds, the feelings, operations, and states of the mind, the influences produced on it by the objects and events of the external world, and the relations of those objects and events to each other, as they appear to the mental eye.

In all nations, the faculties of the mind are the same, differing only in degree; and the external world, with its leading objects and occurrences, and their relations, both to the mind and to each other, are also the same. Hence the feelings, operations, and states of the mind are, in kind, likewise identical. It follows, therefore, of necessity, that the fundamental principles of the means of expressing these things are in like manner identical. A brief detail will illustrate this, as far as is requisite to our present purpose.

The external world consists of substances or objects, with their qualities and relations, and the movements or changes, by which those qualities and relations are altered. The changes are called events. Out of this state of things arise the three principal parts of speech, which are necessarily the same in every language; the *noun substantive*, being the name of objects or events; the *adjective*, denoting their qualities; and the *verb*, which expresses the chief relations and their changes. The latter part of speech expresses also simple existence. In every change of quality or relation produced, some object must act, and others be acted on. Hence arise two forms of the verb, the *active* and *passive*; and two cases or conditions of the noun, the nominative and objective. When action is represented as passing from one substance or thing to another, that which performs the action is in the nominative case, and that which sustains it is in the objective. By the passive form of the verb, action is expressed, as falling on some object or thing, without any necessary reference to the source from which it comes. The recipient of the action is then in the nominative or objective case, according to the mode of expression used. Nouns have also other cases or conditions, which are represented in some languages, by changes or inflections in the terminations of the nouns themselves, and, in others, by certain words accompanying them.

Actions or events occur at different times, and under different circumstances and relations. These also the verb must express. Hence the different tenses, referring to periods past, present, and to come, and the different moods, denoting the manner and circumstances of the action. Both moods and tenses are formed, in some instances, by changes in the terminations of the verb, and, in others, by means of auxiliary verbs. Languages differ considerably in the precision, with which they mark the relative dates of past and future events; and no little of the perfection of the language depends on this. Another variety in forms of expression is rendered necessary by the different numbers of the things that act, and of those that are acted on. This end is attained by the singular, dual, and plural numbers of nouns and verbs. Concord and government between words are also essential attributes of language.

The frequent repetition of nouns or the names of things, in discourse or writing, would be not only ungraceful, but inconvenient. Hence the formation of *pronouns*, or words serving as substitutes for nouns. Actions have qualities, as well as objects; and it is necessary that they also be expressed in speech. This end is attained by the formation of

adverbs. Between both objects and actions, there are certain minute relations and connexions, which cannot be represented by verbs. This want is supplied by *prepositions* and *conjunctions*. There are instinctive exclamations, expressive of certain internal feelings; as those of joy, sorrow, surprise, affright, and others. From this source have arisen the vocables called *interjections*. The last part of speech to be mentioned is the *participle*; so called, because, in form and meaning, it partakes of both the verb and the noun, especially the noun adjective. By contributing to accuracy and completeness of expression, it is highly useful in speech. The qualities of objects and actions often differ in degree. To meet this want, the different degrees of comparison are instituted. Objects also differ in sex. Corresponding to this, nouns have different genders, which, in different languages, are marked in different ways.

The impressions made directly and primitively on the mind, by the objects and events of the external world, excite ideas of simple perception. These are expressed by their appropriate nouns, as color, sound, form, size, resistance, place, storm, battle. So are the objects which produce them; as grass, tree, horse, man, mountain, trumpet, army, air, cloud. These simple ideas, formed by the perceptive faculties, constitute the elements of knowledge. By working on them, through its reflecting faculties, which are of a higher order, and which operate, each according to its nature, the mind forms from them other ideas of a more complex, subtle, and abstract character. To represent these, corresponding nouns or names are invented, and make a part of language. Some of these are as follows: like, unlike, likeness, unlikeness, difference, identity, whiteness, blackness, virtue, vice, right, wrong, cause, effect, and many others. The formation of abstract ideas being one of the highest operations of the mind, the existence of the abstract terms, by which they are expressed, gives evidence of a corresponding degree of perfection in speech. Hence rude and ignorant nations have but few abstractions.

Inasmuch then as language not only presents a picture of the external world, as it appears to the mind, but gives also a representation of the various faculties of the mind, of their present condition, and of the degree of their general discipline, and the extent of their operations, it follows, that its copiousness and perfection must correspond to the mental cultivation of the people who speak it. In plainer terms, the richer a people are in knowledge, the more numerous and abstract are their ideas, and the more copious, refined, and perfect is their language. While this influence is deducible from first principles, its truth is established by observation. Nor will it be denied, that the more perfect and copious a language is, the more invigorating and improving is the exercise, which the study of its structure and philosophy affords to the mind. Much of the mental discipline imparted by this exercise arises from the investigation of *concord*, *government*, and *structure*; and they are common to every language.

The correctness of the foregoing principles, generally, will not be controverted. Suppose, then, a comparison, in conformity to them, be instituted between the Greek or the Latin, and the English languages; which of them will preponderate, as a philosophical study? Will the English be found inferior to the others? No color of reason is per-

ceived for thinking so ; but rather the reverse. Its fundamental principles are the same, its structure is as good, and its superior copiousness is striking. Nor is it inferior in force, correctness, variety, precision, or elegance of expression. If the faculties of pupils are at any time more severely exercised, in studying Greek or Latin, than in studying English or French, it is because they are more *puzzled* to detect the meaning of the former than of the latter. But such puzzling is neither pleasant nor instructive. On the contrary, it fatigues the mind, without improving it, and often produces an aversion from learning. All things considered, we feel convinced, that no mental faculty is disciplined and strengthened, by studying Greek and Latin, which may not be as profitably trained, and as highly invigorated, by the study of English and French, provided it be pursued in a judicious manner, and to the requisite extent. The misfortune is, and we might add, the *fault* is, that in most colleges in the United States, where *days* are devoted to the cultivation of a knowledge of the ancient languages, *hours* are not given to the *real study* of our mother tongue. To read a few books, at times very loosely, and scarcely ever critically, and write a few formal exercises in English, is not the way to become versed, as every educated American ought to be, in the English language. It is not the way to *study* it, and gain a philosophical knowledge and a full command of it in writing and speaking. Yet, in most of our seats of learning, but little more is done to ripen English scholars. We are acquainted with no institution, whether academy, college, or university, where the pupils are thoroughly disciplined in English,—none where they are called on to master it completely as a branch of philosophy, and reduce their knowledge of it to practice, by sufficient training in composition and rhetoric. We know that no such institution exists in the *United States*; and we *believe* that none such exists in *Great-Britain*. The result is often manifested by literary wants, peculiarly discreditable to our systems of instruction. We have seen many college graduates, who could translate Greek and Latin with considerable fluency, and even write and converse in them, whose knowledge of English literature was so radically defective, that they could not compose a decent letter. Their deficiency was striking even in the spelling of common words. We could name an individual, who has been a *Professor* in *one* college, and a *President elect* of *three* others, if not *four*, of whom this is true! He is ignorant alike of the construction and orthography of his mother tongue! And yet he is a Greek and Latin scholar! On the contrary, many a boarding-school girl, who is a stranger to ancient literature, speaks and writes the English language with fluency and correctness. Why? because she has been exercised in it; the only way, in which a true knowledge and practical command of it can ever be acquired; and it can be thus acquired, without a knowledge of any other language.*

* It cannot be denied, that, in one respect at least, the study of Greek and Latin has been injurious. It has prevented the actual and thorough study of English. The ground on which it has done this is obvious. Latin and Greek are the ancient and classical, and, therefore, reputedly the superior languages. A knowledge of them, therefore, is comparatively an object of high ambition. Hence they are *studied*. Not so with English. It is a modern, every-day language, a knowledge of which is neither an object of ambition, nor a point of honor or pride. Hence, instead of being *studied*, it is simply *read*. And, while the ancient languages are taught by men of talents and cultivation, in handsome and even magnificent edifices, it is *pretended* to be taught in log cabins, by men who are ignorant of it, and of every thing else. We repeat, without fear of being put in the wrong, that this neglect of English, and the low estimation, in which the study of it is held by

The writings of the ancients have long ceased to be a source of science. All their most valuable *historical matter* is also translated into some of the living languages, especially into English. It has been shown, moreover, that the study of them does not give to the faculties of the pupil a degree of exercise more improving than the thorough study of a modern tongue. Whatever advantages, then, may result from a knowledge of the ancient classics, belong to literature alone. Science, we say, disclaims them. Shall we be told, that an acquaintance with them prepares the mind better for the reception of science, general and professional, than any other sort of attainment? The friends of this notion, long as it has prevailed, and almost universal as it is, ought not to be surprised, if, on being placed in the balance, it should be found wanting. But, before weighing it, we must examine one or two other arguments, urged by the Committee, in favor of the study of Greek and Latin. When speaking of the study of modern languages, they say:—

“If the languages and literature of Italy, France, and Spain, beyond what is merely superficial, is an object with the student, they should be acquired *through the Latin*: nor is there reason to doubt, so far as experience affords the means of judging, that it is the most *expeditious* mode of acquiring a familiarity with the languages in question.”

In the sentiment here advanced, we cannot concur. Reason, observation, experience, and every other consideration bearing on it, unite in persuading us that it is unfounded. We acknowledge the close family alliance between Latin, Italian, French, and Spanish, the former being the parent tongue. But we *know* that, by the adoption and steady pursuit of the proper course, a “familiarity” with the *three last* can be acquired, not only without the aid of the *first*, but in a *period not longer, if so long*, as that requisite to the attainment of a similar “familiarity” with the *first alone*. Latin, as usually studied, cannot be mastered in less than three years. Few students can become really “familiar” with it even in that time. Yet, in the same period, a youth of common capacity may become so well versed in Italian, French, and Spanish, as to speak and write them with fluency and correctness. We say this *can* be done, because we know it *has* been done. Might we speak of our personal experience, we would say, that we knew something of Latin, when we studied the modern tongues; yet we were insensible of any facilities derived from the attainment; except as related to our knowledge of *language in the abstract*, and some experience and *tact* we had gained in learning it; and that might have been acquired from the study of *any language*—we mean the study of it *philosophically*. Some of our fellow-students,

the public, is to be attributed chiefly to the attachment of too much importance to an acquaintance with Greek and Latin.

True, this state of things is passing away; and may it pass speedily! The change, within the present century, is great, and all for the better. In most, we believe in all the respectable seats of learning of our country, the cultivation of the English language is improving. Still, however, it is every where much below what it ought to be, and what we trust it will be, by the middle of the century. We shall only add, that those, whose native tongue is English, should make it a point of national pride and ambition, not only to understand it thoroughly, but to give to it the high standing, in the estimation of the world, to which it is entitled. And this can be done only by making it a subject of serious study. That being effected, English will be no longer a *step child* in our academies, colleges, and universities. The ancient languages will be no longer permitted to overshadow it, and triumph in its degradation.

who had no knowledge of Latin, and who were not accounted more apt than ourselves in learning languages, formed an acquaintance with French, Italian, and Spanish, very near as readily as we did, and seemed, in a short time, to understand them as thoroughly. We believe some of the best French and Italian teachers in the United States, prefer that their pupils *should not have learned Latin*. The female academies in our country furnish a strong argument in support of our views on this subject. Their pupils are strangers to Latin; yet they learn French and Italian with more facility, and as much accuracy, as most of our youths at college.

When about to advance the sentiment we are now considering, the Committee would have done well to have remembered the Law maxim, *Quod probat nimis, probet nihil*. They certainly attempted to prove too much in favor of classical learning, when they asserted, that the attainment of a knowledge of it is "the most *expeditious* mode of acquiring a familiarity with Italian, French, and Spanish"—thus alleging, if we understand their meaning, that a youth can attain a knowledge of Latin and French, Latin and Italian, or Latin and Spanish, in a shorter time than he can learn either of the three modern languages alone! We shall only add, that scores of individuals might be named, who, without having ever looked into a Latin author, have acquired a knowledge of "the languages and literature of Italy, France, and Spain," *far "beyond what is merely superficial."* Can a foreigner,—say a Frenchman or a German,—attain, through a familiarity with Greek and Latin, a more thorough and commanding knowledge of English, than an American or an Englishman can, without Greek and Latin, but completely disciplined in his native tongue? An affirmative answer to this question would be alike inconsistent with reason and experience. Nor can an American acquire, by the aid of Latin, as perfect an acquaintance with French, as a Parisian can without it. One extract more, and we shall have done with the pamphlet.

"We are the people, (say the Committee) the genius of whose government and institutions, more especially and imperiously than any other, demands that the field of classical learning be industriously and thoroughly explored and cultivated, and its rich productions gathered. The models of ancient literature, which are put into the hands of the young student, can hardly fail to imbue his mind with the principles of liberty; to inspire the liveliest patriotism, and to excite to noble and generous action, and are therefore peculiarly adapted to the American youth. To appreciate justly the character of the ancients, the thorough study and accurate knowledge of their classics, in the language of the originals, is indispensable; as the simplicity, energy, and striking peculiarities of these pristine exemplars of freedom, which are forcibly and beautifully displayed in their models of classical literature, are scarcely more discoverable in ordinary or even the most faithful translations, than are the warmth, animation, and intellectual illumination of the living, active, and intelligent being, in the sculptured imitation of the statuary."

This is the most exceptionable paragraph we have quoted. It has much more of rant than reason in it. Some people will call it eloquent; and its author perhaps intended to make it so. We call it declamatory, frothy, and erroneous; while plainness, solidity, and truth

are essential to eloquence. It is a tissue of assertion, unsupported by a tittle of proof. It is equally extravagant in language and sentiment. Whoever dreamed before of deriving from the writings of the ancients, either sparks to kindle, or breath to fan, the fires of freedom and patriotism in modern bosoms? As well might the fancy have been indulged of brightening and swelling the blaze of Moscow, by a farthing rush-light, when the conflagration was at its height. We venture to say, that for *every single paragraph* breathing a spirit of *rational freedom*, that can be found in the literature of Greece and Rome, *one thousand* are contained in the works of British, American, and other modern writers. Nor, on this subject, did the moderns borrow from the ancients. The reason is plain. The latter had little or nothing to lend. The former, therefore, looked into themselves, and into the reason and nature of things, and found *there* the treasures they sought. And, as to patriotism, the uncultured Caledonians of old, and the Swiss peasants, at a later period, displayed as much of it, as ever the Greeks or Romans did. And so would the uncultured Irish now, were they in a condition to do so. Was it ancient literature that taught and emboldened the barons of England to extort from their monarch their *Magna Charta*? No: such was their want of scholarship that they could scarcely read the instrument, when prepared. Some of them could not read at all. Yet that single charter contains more of the genuine principles of freedom and of human rights, than all that the Greeks and Romans could boast. Were the American patriots better versed in ancient literature than any other people, when they asserted and achieved their independence? Many who had never opened a Latin dictionary, and who were strangers to the Greek alphabet, acted distinguished parts on that occasion. Be the cause what it may, the Anglo-Saxons and their descendants have long understood, and understand at present, what salutary freedom is, much better than any other people. The Greeks and Romans might have derived useful lessons from them, on that subject. Nor is it true that a spirit of freedom and patriotism has prevailed in European countries, in proportion to the prevalence of classical knowledge. We do not say that the reverse of this is true,—though facts somewhat favorable to such a position might be adduced; but we do say, that it is a knowledge of *nature*, not of Greek and Latin, which teaches man his rights.* We shall only add, that, in the Mississippi Valley, where classical literature has not yet taken root, the spirit of patriotism is as pure and pervasive, and the love and knowledge of freedom as fervid and correct, as in any other portion of the globe—much more so than they ever were in Greece or Rome.

Nor can we subscribe to the belief, however general, and however often and dogmatically asserted, that it is impossible to infuse into an English translation the spirit, force, and fire of an ancient Greek

* There is a much greater amount of classical learning in Germany, than in any other equal portion of the globe. Why then have not the Germans taken a lead in the overthrow of despotism, the assertion of human right, and the establishment of freedom? Why, on the contrary, do they calmly tolerate the sway of one of the most despotic governments of Europe? The reason is plain. The spirit of freedom is awakened and nourished, not by the classical tomes of the ancients, but by the books of the moderns—more especially, however, by the book of nature. That chapter of the latter, which gives the true history and philosophy of man, his rights, privileges, and all his relations, contains a hundred fold more of the spirit of freedom, than all the Greeks and Romans ever wrote. Let the Germans study that, with but half the attention they bestow on ancient literature, and the Austrian and Prussian sceptres will soon be shorn of much of their power, or shattered to pieces.

or Roman composition. Or, if an impossibility of the kind exist, it is because the original production is not fully comprehended and felt. And if the disciplined translator cannot become thoroughly master of the original, is it probable that the common reader of Greek and Latin can? If the better scholar fail, will the worse succeed? These questions answer themselves.

The English is as powerful and expressive a language, as the Latin or Greek; and, as heretofore mentioned, it is more copious than either. It is in vain to tell us, then, that when an Englishman or an American fully comprehends the meaning, and enters perfectly into the spirit of a piece of ancient literature, whether it be prose or verse, and is, at the same time, equal as a writer to the author of it—and practice will render him so—it is in vain, we say, to contend, that, under these circumstances, a translation may not be rendered equal to the original. If, owing to the peculiarities of different languages, some transient beauties be lost, others may be added, and neither the meaning nor the spirit of the ancient composition be marred. In proof of this, we offer Murphy's translation of Tacitus, in which we venture to say there are but few, if any passages, where the Roman historian and biographer has suffered in the version. In some, we have thought him improved. Nor do we hesitate to add, that there is not *one* Greek scholar in a *thousand*, who, did pride permit him to acknowledge the truth, does not read to more advantage, and with a higher relish, Pope's translation, than Homer's original. The same is true of the translation, by the same English author, of Ovid's celebrated letter of Sappho to Phaon. In spirit, feeling, and force, the translator has surpassed his original. True; he does not equal him in brevity of expression; nor, for reasons connected with the two languages, is it possible to render an English translation as brief as a Latin original. But this is the only quality, in which it need be inferior, and it is of but little moment. We shall only add, that the more purely and elegantly one language is written, the more easily and literally can it be translated into another. Hence the great facility of turning the writings of Voltaire into English.

We are aware of the prejudice arrayed against us, on this subject. But we are unmoved by it, and fearlessly state what we believe, in defiance of it. We therefore repeat, that an English scholar, who is an able and accomplished writer, can, provided he thoroughly comprehends it, and feels it, translate a Greek or Latin composition, matter and spirit, into his mother tongue. And, unless the scholar, who reads it in the original, thus comprehends and feels it, he does not enjoy it, and is not benefited by it, as the Committee allege he is. What advantage does he derive from visions of beauty floating in his mind, which he is unable to express in his own tongue? They neither enrich, strengthen, nor refine him, as a writer or a speaker. They are mere mental lumber, and therefore unavailable, if not prejudicial. But the truth is, that the whole matter is but a fancy. Whatever a scholar clearly understands, no matter from what source it is derived—the study of Greek and Latin, or the study of nature—he *can* communicate *clearly* and *forcibly*, provided he is a forcible thinker, and has made himself master of his native language. In contending, then, that an individual can be delighted and benefited, by the beauties of works written in the dead languages, while he is unable to transfer

those beauties, and use them in a living language, the Committee appear to us to have contradicted themselves. In such a case, there is no *delight* or *improvement*, without a *feel* *perceived* of what delights and improves; and, if *possessed*, the beauty can be translated, to delight and improve others.*

To us, the opinion of the Committee seems equally unfounded when they assert, that, "to appreciate justly the character of the ancients, the thorough study and accurate knowledge of their classics, in the language of the originals, are indispensable. The mere knowledge of a language, and of the number, form, and powers of the letters in which it is written, give but a very limited acquaintance with those who speak it. It is the literature and the history of a people that disclose their character. And, as respects the ancients, access can now be had to these two sources of information, without a knowledge of their language. We know of no Greek or Roman work, valuable on account of the matter it contains, which has not been translated. And, indeed, not a few have been translated, that have no intrinsic value. To call them curious, is to give them their full meed of praise. There is enough written in English, or translated into it, to communicate to those, who will study it correctly, as intimate an acquaintance with the ancients, in every matter and relation worth knowing, as the most accomplished Hellenists and Latinists of the day have. To contend, then, that to gain a knowledge of the Greeks or Romans, in their manners, persons, customs, civil and household economy, or any thing else of moment, we must study their languages, is a mistake. As well may it be said, that to attain a knowledge of the Russians or Laplanders, we must study *their* languages, instead of reading well-written histories of them. Some of the best-informed Grecian and Roman antiquarians we have seen, knew nothing of the dead languages. They had derived all their knowledge of antiquity from English publications, original or translated. Shakespeare, though

* It would be well for those, who believe in the inconceivable beauty and delights inherent in Greek and Latin composition, to endeavor to ascertain how much of those qualities are in the *sentiment*, and how much in the *sound*. The sonorosity and euphony of Greek and Latin are much superior to those of English. Of this, every classical scholar must be sensible. Hence much of the delight derived from reading them, is the delight of harmonious musical sound—especially when the sound is an "echo to the sense." We say "harmonious sound," for such is generally the exquisite order and arrangement of the words, that, if they be altered, much of the beauty of the passage is marred, and an equal amount of the pleasure of reading it dissipated. This may be illustrated and proved by the following quotations:—

"*Exoritur clamorque virum clangorique tubarum*"—an exquisitely beautiful line, the sound fairly echoing the sense. Let the words be transposed into their natural order, "*Clamorique virum clangorique tubarum exoritur*," and more than half the beauty is gone.

"*Stat sonipes, ac frana feroz spumantia mandit.*"

"*Feroz sonipes stat, ac mandit spumantia frana.*"

"*Intonuere poli et crebris micat ignibus aether.*"

"*Poli intonuere et aether micat crebris ignibus.*"

Every one must perceive that the beauty of the two latter lines is equally destroyed, by changing the artificial to the natural arrangement of their words. Of Greek and Latin composition generally the same is true. The only object of transposition in it, is euphony and harmony, or the improvement of sound. In English composition, much is already done, and more may be done, in the same way.

There is also a reason, why we fancy more beauty in Greek and Latin composition, than we really perceive. We do not in general *perfectly understand* it. A sort of shadowy dimness hangs over its meaning. And every one knows that a little obscurity heightens materially the feeling of beauty and sublimity. This it does, by giving more play and wider scope to the imagination. The beauty of a moonlight scene is much improved, by the fleecy rack, which flits across the heavens.

Once more. Classical scholars are proud of their attainments. They, therefore, feel a selfish enjoyment in persuading themselves that they have access to rich fountains of pleasure, in their knowledge of Greek and Latin, from which the uninitiated are excluded. And it is a law of human nature, that men can so far realize their wishes, as to believe ultimately what they are anxious to believe. Such are some of the chief reasons, why it is contended, that the beauty and spirit of Greek and Latin composition are necessarily lost in a translation.

unversed in the languages of the Greeks and Romans, had an intimate acquaintance with their characters, customs, manners, and literature. Yet, since his time, translations have been greatly multiplied and extended, and original works on those points written; and hence the same amount of knowledge, which he had, may now be much more easily acquired.

The ancient languages, then, being no longer a source of either science or history, and the study of them having no more influence in training and strengthening the higher faculties of the mind, than the study of modern languages, were the question put, "In what respect are scholars benefited by a knowledge of them?" the answer must be, "In *polite literature* alone."* How far they are benefited even there, shall be our next inquiry. This brings us, *to consider* a question proposed, *in substance*, in an early part of this article.

Can an Englishman or an American, versed in modern languages only—say English, French, and Italian—but thoroughly disciplined in science, become as able and accomplished a writer and speaker, as if he had a knowledge of Greek and Latin?

This is an important problem, in the present state of the world, more especially, perhaps, in our own country. And we repeat, that it can be solved, conclusively, only by an experiment, which has never yet been made. The effect of a true *modern education* has never been tried—certainly never on a broad scale. No one, we mean, as far as we are informed, has been thoroughly imbued with modern languages and modern science,† and extensively practised in writing and speaking, without having some acquaintance also with Greek and Latin. Hence a vast majority of great authors and orators have been necessarily more or less of classical scholars. It would be strange were it otherwise. The tide of opinion, united to the influence of *fashion*, has compelled every one educated for professional, public, or literary life, to pay some attention to ancient literature. But has this study aided them essentially in the attainment of distinction? or has it been only an accompaniment of it—tending, perhaps, to decorate the mind, but neither to enrich nor strengthen it? To reply, that it has been an indispensable element of the greatness and lustre acquired, would be hazardous, we think, for various reasons.

Some of the most distinguished orators of modern times, have had but a slight acquaintance with Greek and Latin, and others none at all. Among the former may be mentioned Chatham, Erskine, and Hamilton; and among the latter, Henry, Whitesfield, and two or three Americans now living, whom it might be indelicate to name. Respecting authors the same is true.

* It is urged, by the Committee, as another argument in favor of a knowledge of Greek and Latin, that it qualifies its possessor better than he could be without it, to travel, for information or pleasure, through Europe. To this we shall only reply, that we have never found it necessary to converse in either Greek or Latin, in Europe, any more than in the United States. We have mingled somewhat there in literary and scientific society, as well as in social and fashionable circles; and English, French, or Italian, never failed to serve us, as a medium of conversation. Through one or another of these languages, we could communicate intelligibly all we had to impart, and receive, in return, all we wished to know. And we believe the same is true of every other traveler, who moves only in enlightened society. True; we met, *by accident*, a few bevyes of *schoolboys*, who manifested at once their learning and pedantry—not to say their ill breeding—by speaking Latin, garnished occasionally with a scrap or two of Greek. But for such coteries we had no predilection, inasmuch as we usually found their knowledge of ancient affairs, fully counterbalanced by their *ignorance of modern ones*—the latter being, in our opinion, the more important.

† Under the phrase "modern science," it will be understood that we include mathematics, and such other branches of science as were known to the ancients, with their modern improvements.

Shakspeare, the first writer, in some respects, the world has produced, was a stranger to the ancient languages; and Moliere, Fielding, and Cuvier were in the same condition. So was Franklin, whose style is a model of simplicity, perspicuity, and chasteness; and so was Washington, who wrote with uncommon elegance and power. Sir Humphrey Davy, an excellent writer, an eloquent speaker, President of the Royal Society, and the ablest chemist of his day, had no classical learning. We believe the same is true of Mr. Bowditch, one of the most accomplished mathematicians and astronomers of the age, and an able writer; and we know the same was true of the late Mr. Rittenhouse. Yet so deeply versed in Astronomy was the latter, that, in the accuracy and importance of his observations on the transit of Venus over the Sun, many years ago, he surpassed all the astronomers of Europe. And, in a mere literary point of view, some of his writings are highly creditable. Yet none of these studied English as thoroughly, or obtained as perfect a command of it, as he might have done. Each of them, therefore, might have greatly improved his style and manner, as a writer, by a steady and continued effort to that effect.

That the style of English authors is far from being perfect, in proportion to their knowledge of the dead languages, appears from numerous instances. Sir Walter Scott and Sir James Mackintosh were greatly inferior, in classical scholarship, to many we could name, who can scarcely write grammatical English. Of Jeffrey, Bulwer, Cooper, and Irwin, the same is true. Few men write better English, or express themselves more vigorously, than William Cobbett, who is totally unversed in Greek and Latin. The same was true of Thomas Paine. And some of the most correct and fascinating writers of the day are females, who are also strangers to the ancient classics.*

Shall we be told, that our references here are only to individuals, possessed of native talents sufficiently powerful to raise them to distinction, *without* the aid of classical attainments; but that *with* such aid, they would have been much more distinguished? We reply that this argument, so constantly used on occasions like the present, and deemed so satisfactory, is much more specious than solid. Indeed, it appears to us to be wanting in solidity altogether. To say that the individuals referred to, would, by the aid of Greek and Latin, have had greater power, and would, therefore, have attained more celebrity, is *to assert*, not *to prove*. It is to hazard a conjecture on a point, which reason and experiment alone can decide. We should be justified, therefore, in resorting to a counter assertion, and saying, in reply to it, that they would not. But we must not deal in empty contradiction, although we are contending with empty supposition. Our business is to reason, not barely to deny.

The question is not, Whether Shakspeare, Moliere, Franklin, Washington, and others, would have been benefited by such an early and general education, as would have disciplined and strengthened all

* In one respect, we have an infinite advantage over our opponents. Ours is the *positive*, theirs the *negative* side of the question. A single proof from us, therefore, is paramount to all the negations they can offer. But we have furnished sundry proofs, in mentioning the names of several individuals, who have become accomplished writers and speakers, without a knowledge of Greek or Latin. We consider our opinion, therefore, fully established. The maxim, that the whole is greater than a part, is not more so.

the faculties of their minds? We believe they would. The point to be settled is, Whether the study of the dead languages would have bestowed that education? and we believe it *would not*. Or the question may be, Could not the requisite instruction and training have been acquired, without those languages? We think it could.

We repeat, that an acquaintance with Greek and Latin does not teach its possessor to observe, think, or analyze. Some of the most accurate and successful observers, and most vigorous thinkers, are destitute of it, while many, who have it, are very feeble in these respects. Nor does it teach him to *read*; because he can read the modern languages without it. So can he, without it, listen to lectures, conversation, and other forms of oral communication. But these are the chief channels, through which information is acquired. It neither aids him, then, in collecting knowledge, nor in reflecting on it, preparing it for practical purposes, and then applying it. If it improves power in any thing, it is in expressing his ideas, when formed, in suitable language. As already stated, it disciplines his faculty of language alone. But that is comparatively a humble faculty, and constituted but little of the mental greatness and power of such men as Shakspeare, Franklin, and Washington. It only aided in manifesting that power. Their superiority arose chiefly from the great strength and activity of their faculties of observation, reflection, combination, and judgement. It consisted in the general vigor and compass of their genius; and neither Greek nor Latin could have enlarged or strengthened that.* To have attempted the invigoration of such minds, by such means, would have been like an effort to add to the might of the eagle, by improving a single pinion of his wing. To write or speak powerfully is the result of powerful conception and thought, of which words are but the drapery; while the use of graceful, accurate, and classical language is compatible with feeble thinking. Hence many books, exceedingly limited in matter, are written in a pure and pleasing style. The mere cultivation of language, therefore, by the study of Greek and Latin, makes but a humble element of a complete modern education, and adds but little to mental development. It could not have increased, in any useful or even perceptible degree, the power or renown of either the philosopher, who disarmed the thunder-cloud, the hero, who achieved the freedom of a continent, or the chief magistrate, who governed a nation with consummate wisdom. Nor can it ever strengthen the feeble-minded. It can never confer distinction, in

* Innumerable instances might be adduced to show, that much ancient learning may be possessed to very little purpose. Indeed, of mere book-learning, whether ancient or modern, the same is true. It is altogether insufficient to make a great man—especially a *practical* one. It has been already observed, that some of the greatest practical men that have appeared—improvers, inventors, and discoverers, both in science and the arts, have had but little learning of any kind, and none at all in Greek and Latin. But they have all been devoted readers of the book of nature, by observation and reflection. Their knowledge was, therefore, strictly their own; and most of their intellectual faculties were competently exercised and strengthened in acquiring and using it. In the acquisition of knowledge *by reading*, the faculties are exercised comparatively in a very moderate degree, and therefore but slightly strengthened and improved. Learning fills the mind, but does not invigorate it. Unless, therefore, the knowledge attained by reading, be seriously reflected on, and severely tested, by bringing it to the standard of nature, the mental faculties are but little benefited by it. Hence, one who reads much, and thinks but little, is called, in form of disrespect, a *book-worm*. It is often said that reading makes a full man, conversation a ready man, and writing an accurate one. To this may be safely added, that, without observation and reflection, neither books, conversation, nor writing, nor the three united, can ever make a man great or efficient. That they may be invigorated, and rendered available for high purposes, the faculties must be suitably exercised. And it can scarcely be too often repeated, that the proper exercise of them can be derived only from the study of nature.

things of moment, on those who *might* not have been distinguished without it. If it serves as an occasional ornament, it can do nothing more. And to do even that, consistently with taste, it must be used but seldom. A brief analysis will show how limited an element of a modern education, a knowledge of Greek and Latin constitutes. Let it be given.

To be liberal and complete, the education of an American, or an Englishman, must include the following branches of knowledge. The pupil must be taught to read and speak his native tongue, and to write. On his attainment in these branches, it will not be contended that Greek and Latin have any influence. He must, also, be instructed in arithmetic, book-keeping, algebra, mathematics in its several subdivisions, experimental philosophy, and astronomy. With the knowledge of these, again, the ancient languages have no connexion. But our pupil's course of instruction is yet far from being complete. He must be versed in logic, general history, chronology, geography, chemistry, mineralogy, botany, natural history, political economy, mental philosophy,—including the science of morals, and belles-lettres; including philosophical grammar, composition, rhetoric, taste, and criticism,—and he ought to have an acquaintance with natural religion. Nor is it less important that he should know something of the structure, functions, dependencies, and relations of the human body. The entire neglect of this branch of science, in our seats of learning, is a fault, not to call it a serious evil. The study of it would not only further enlighten and liberalize the mind, by exhibiting to it one of the most beautiful specimens of the wisdom of creation; the knowledge thus acquired might be turned to an invaluable account, in the management of education, and the preservation of health.

So numerous are the elements of a complete modern education, to which a few others might be added: and in the attainment of only one of them does a knowledge of Greek and Latin afford any facility. We allude to belles-lettres. Will any one contend that it aids, also, in historical researches? We reply, In a very limited degree: and only in those departments of history, which are least useful. Nor do we hesitate to express our belief, that, as far as philosophical grammar, composition, rhetoric, and taste are concerned, belles-lettres, also, may be as successfully cultivated, without its aid, as with it. In other words, scholars, who have never studied the ancient languages, may speak and write the English tongue, as correctly, gracefully, and classically, and with as much eloquence and power as those who have. That an acquaintance with Greek and Latin aids in mere biblical criticism, especially as relates to ancient works, is not denied. But that attainment is comparatively of little value. It renders the scholar somewhat more learned; but it does not increase his practical power, except on a few points, which are more curious than useful.

The English language is a compound of three others; the Saxon, which is its root, and the Greek and Latin, which, besides adding to its copiousness, variety, and force, have improved it in elegance, and some other qualities. When it was in its infancy, its amount of words being incomplete, its construction and spelling not matured, and considerable changes constantly occurring in it, a knowledge of the tongues, out of which it is formed, was necessary to the scholar—of

the Saxon,* as well as of the others. It was then a dependent and imperfect language, unequal to the wants of science and letters, and needed, therefore, further cultivation. But, at present, the case is different. It is now as mature as Greek or Latin, and has as much of an independent existence. It is in its minority no longer. Its structure and principles are established, its meaning is defined, and its origin pointed out, in well-prepared dictionaries, and its literature, the most extensive in the world, is as highly finished, as any other. Nor, except as may relate to a few technical terms, does it seem likely to receive any further increase *directly* from Greek or Latin. It has already drained those languages of all it wants for common use, and it will be itself the source of the chief additions and improvements, it may hereafter receive. It might be easily shown that it contains already words enough, to serve as the source of any verbal additions, that may be necessary hereafter, for the expression of new modifications of thought. And the process of forming new words, from its present stock, is easy and familiar.† A thorough knowledge of it, therefore, may be acquired, by a sufficient cultivation of *itself alone*, without the least aid from the study of any other tongue. Dictionaries will give the true meaning and derivation of words; well-prepared grammars will teach the structure and philosophy of it; the study of the best English authors, under competent instructors, will form a correct taste in it, and diligent and persevering practice in speaking and composition, will confer excellence in both. In fine; the philosophical and practical study of the English tongue, *by itself*, carried to the extent, and executed with the thoroughness it deserves, may be made to produce more highly accomplished English writers, than have yet appeared. We have said the study of English "*by itself*;" because the cultivation of one language cannot improve a scholar in the knowledge of another. The study of French gives no aid in forming an acquaintance with German, nor the study of the latter, in acquiring a knowledge of Spanish. Nor can the mere cultivation of Greek and Latin contribute to the formation of a finished English scholar.‡ He

* An acquaintance with Saxon, even now, is as necessary to a thorough knowledge of English, as an acquaintance with Greek and Latin. Yet nobody dreams of studying Saxon. The reason is obvious. Custom has not rendered it fashionable. Thus is the *parent-stream* of our knowledge neglected, as useless, while two mere *feeders* are pronounced *essential*, and years spent in acquiring a knowledge of them.

† For ample instruction on this point, see Webster's Quarto Dictionary, article, GRAMMAR, head, DERIVATION. The occasional formation of new English words may be a matter of convenience, and perhaps of elegance; but it can never be *necessary*. Certainly no ground is discoverable, from which the necessity can arise. It might be readily demonstrated, that, *newly discovered objects excepted*, no idea or form of thought can present itself to the mind, which may not be clearly expressed, in our language, with its present stock of words, in perhaps a *hundred different ways*. In proof of this, it rarely, if ever, happens that the same thought is clothed in the same words, by any two original writers or speakers. Such is the copiousness of our mother tongue. The number of different combinations, that may be formed out of its seventy or eighty thousand words, is beyond the power of man to compute, or even fancy. If it be not *infinite*, it approaches so near it, that the line of separation cannot be imagined; much less, shown.

‡ We wish to be clearly understood on this point. We do not deny that an acquaintance with Greek and Latin may make the possessor of it a more erudite English scholar, than he could be without it. On the contrary, we acknowledge that it may. It will give him a more accurate knowledge of the etymology and roots of the language. That sort of knowledge, however, is greatly overrated. Even to the writer and the orator it is much more curious than useful; and, in the transaction of affairs, whether public or private, its value is still less. It does not necessarily and certainly teach either the meaning, spelling, or pronunciation of words. They are greatly influenced by custom and fashion, and are, therefore, far from being stable and uniform. The history of the English language, for the last two or three centuries, proves this. In fine; a mere knowledge of its derivation does not, in one case in ten thousand, create a greater fitness to use the English tongue, to the highest and best effect, than can be attained without it. Besides; our best dictionaries teach the etymology of our principal words, to an extent sufficient for all useful purposes. The Greek, the most perfect of languages, had no mother-tongue, to which it could be

who would understand thoroughly either a language or any thing else, must *especially* study it.

Let two youths, equal in capacity, be educated, one of them perfectly in English, and the several branches of science heretofore indicated, without Greek or Latin, and the other after the mode usually pursued in the seats of learning in England and the United States;—let this experiment be fairly made, and we hazard nothing in saying, that, at the age of twenty, the student of English will be far the more accomplished, both in science and polite literature. He will surpass the other, as a writer and speaker, in every point of excellence. The reason is plain. All his faculties have been invigorated, and taught to work; his mind has been well stored with knowledge, by cultivating the sciences; his thorough study of English, united to his familiarity with the best authors in it, has formed his taste; and long and steady practice in composition and speaking, has given him a ready and entire command of his resources. In the mean time, the faculties of the other have been but *partially* exercised. Too much time has been consumed in the study of language; but not of the English language. That has been neglected, for the sake of ancient literature; or an attempt has been made to learn it through the medium of that literature, and has failed—as it always must. The consequence of all this is, that the mind of the pupil is neither well supplied with knowledge, nor are his powers of expressing what he possesses, either in writing or speaking, matured.

But what is true of *one*, on this subject, is true of *many*. The two scholars here referred to, therefore, may be considered the representatives of indefinite numbers. Nor do we hesitate to believe, that, of two rival colleges, one bestowing the complete English education here designated, and the other adhering to the system of instruction usually pursued in our country, the former would have a striking superiority in the distinction and practical usefulness of its pupils. We regret to add our belief, that, as Greek and Latin are now taught in the United States, the time devoted to the study of them, is, in a great majority of cases, thrown away. The attainment made in them is too superficial to be creditable, or in any way useful.

Are we asked, Whether we would abandon the study of the dead languages altogether? We answer, No; but we would reduce greatly the number of those, who should engage in the study of them; and those, who might thus engage, should become thoroughly versed in them. We would have no smatterers—no linguists *in name*—but accomplished Greek and Latin scholars. They should be scholars *by profession*. And one such could do more good, in applying the ancient languages to the only useful purposes they are calculated to subserve, than the entire phalanx of those shallow Hellenists and Latinists, who swarm so thickly in Europe and America. We say “Europe;” for, in a majority of cases, classical attainment *there*, is not much better than with ourselves. But few critical Greek and Latin scholars

traced. Hence it was studied as an *original*. And so may the English, *in its present condition*, and be made as rich, elegant, and powerful a medium for the expression of feeling, and the utterance of thought, as was ever possessed by Greece or Rome. The well-known fact, that many *ardite* Hellenists and Latinists are very defective in their knowledge of English, and that many others are accurately versed in it, speaking and writing it with elegance and force, without an acquaintance with Greek and Latin, proves conclusively the point we are contending for—that *a knowledge of the dead languages is not essential to the thorough cultivation of all the faculties of the mind*.

can be found any where. They are probably most numerous in Germany. We shall only add, on this point, that no one should be made to toil, for years, in the study of classical learning, unless his faculty of language is of a high order. If it be not so, his toils will be irksome to himself, and useless to others. This distinction, between a fitness and an unfitness to learn languages, though highly important, is rarely made, because the constitution of the mind, creating an aptitude for some studies, and an inaptitude for others, is understood by but few of the teachers of youth. The general notion is, that a pupil, who masters one branch of study with facility, can, with equal facility, master all others; and that if he fails to do so, it is because he is inattentive to them. Yet facts of hourly occurrence prove its fallacy. It is owing to this preposterous practice of attempting to train, in the same way, minds, which nature has cast in different moulds, and marked with striking diversities, that many young men, possessing fine talents for other branches of knowledge, but a weak faculty of language, have become disgusted with the drudgery of classical study, and abandoned their education. Nor is this abandonment the only evil connected with the case. A youth, under these circumstances, leaves college with a loss of reputation. Because he does not learn Latin and Greek, he is accounted either idle and dissipated, or so dull as to be unfit for any useful exertion of mind. Thus is he discouraged, underrated, and perhaps ruined. These things should be looked to, and remedied; and we are confident that the period is approaching, when they will be. A correct understanding of the constitution and powers of the human mind, generally diffused, especially among the directors of seats of instruction, will be the commencement of a new and brilliant era in the work of education.

The belief is general, that to all young men destined to the professions of Divinity, Law, and Medicine, the study of Greek and Latin is indispensable—at least, that it is peculiarly useful. We decline offering any remarks on the preparations deemed necessary for the former of these callings; but, as relates to the two latter, we are compelled to say, that we consider the opinion referred to erroneous. In no respect does a knowledge of the ancient classics facilitate the study of law or medicine, except on the score of technical language; and that can be learned from professional Lexicons, in less than a tenth part of the time usually devoted to classical studies. An acquaintance with the professional phraseology of law* and medicine *might* be acquired in a short time, as a distinct exercise; but the better way would be, for the student to attain it gradually from his Lexicon, during the progress of his professional studies. The portion of time consumed by this would be inconsiderable; and the meaning of terms would be fixed in the

* Shall we be told, in form of an objection, that certain law-books contain many scraps of Latin, which the members of the Bench and Bar should be able to understand? We reply, that this constitutes no objection to the principle we are contending for. Let the Latin quotations be translated, as they ought to be, that the pedantry and mysticism of the profession may have an end. It is neither creditable nor fair, to conceal, under cover of a dead tongue, any thing essential to the administration of justice. Besides; proof can be given, that the objection here stated has no weight—at least, that the obstacle said to be created by scraps of Latin, in law-books, can be easily surmounted. Chief Justice Marshall, one of the ablest jurists of the age—we might add, of any age—never received what can be correctly called a classical education, and is not therefore indebted to the ancient languages for his knowledge of Law. If he ever acquired any knowledge of Greek or Latin, it was a mere smattering, in a common grammar-school, which was of no service to him. Most of his brothers received what is called a “classical education.” Yet, without this advantage, he has towered above them all. He is, moreover, an able writer of his mother tongue, and has been an orator of high standing.

mind more firmly, than in any other way. 'The pupil's Lexicon *must* be his oracle, whether he learn technical language, as a study collateral to that of his profession, or previously, through the medium of Greek and Latin. To no other interpreter can he have recourse. There is, however, a wide difference between the two methods. The oracle must be consulted a hundred times, in the latter, for each single time it will need to be consulted in the former. We may safely add, that of those who have read Greek and Latin, preparatory to the study of law or medicine, nineteen out of twenty are still obliged to consult their Lexicons for the precise meaning of technical terms. In truth, every one is.

Shall we be charged with a disposition to abridge the course of education preparatory to the study of law and medicine, and render it more defective than it is already? The charge would be unfounded. We would greatly enlarge and improve the course; but not by saddling it with a devotion of years to the learning of words, which will be afterwards but rarely used. Instead of this, substantial *things* should be studied, which would give exercise and strength to every faculty of the mind, and store them with valuable matter. The candidates for both professions should have a perfect knowledge of English, and be well versed in history, and in the elements of all the modern sciences. They should have an *intimate and comprehensive acquaintance with nature*; and those educated for medicine should be instructed in French, Italian, and German. Why in these languages? Because they abound in medical works, some of them very valuable, which have not been translated into English, and many of which never will be. Besides, numerous discoveries and improvements in medicine are first recorded in those languages, and ought to be immediately known to British and American physicians. Respecting the necessity of an acquaintance with the modern languages of continental Europe to lawyers, we are not prepared to speak. All statesmen, at least, who may go abroad, on diplomatic missions, or in other public capacities, should be prepared to speak and write in French, if not in other foreign tongues. In fine: every youth destined to public life, or to the profession of medicine, should receive a well-finished liberal education, embracing a knowledge of two or three modern languages, and of the elements of all the sciences. Above all, he should be taught to exercise his own talents on the knowledge he may possess. Without this, attainment is but lumber.

To complete this course of instruction and training will occupy the time of the most highly-gifted youth, from his sixth, until his eighteenth or twentieth year. Nor do we hesitate to believe, that the adoption of such a plan of education would usher in an era of professional, literary, and scientific splendor, such as the world has never witnessed. The study of the sciences would furnish the matter of knowledge, and give strength and activity to the *whole mind*, while the due cultivation of modern language would improve the power and all other qualities of expression, both in writing and speaking.

It has been often said, that the chief reason, why British surpass American writers, in style and manner, is that they are better versed in classical literature. This is a mistake. The superiority of the British writers arises from their being better versed in *English literature*.

ture. In other words, they cultivate with more care, and to a greater extent, the *art of composition*—for it is as real an art, as the making of razors or penknives. And it must be brought to perfection in the same way—by constant practice, and a determination to excel. So must every other pursuit. Many Englishmen have long been writers, *by profession*, and have spent their lives, in improving themselves in the knowledge and use of their mother tongue. Hence their attainment of a fine style—not because they had learned Greek and Latin at school—nor because they had in their eye, when writing, a Greek or Latin model. He who dwells, in recollection, on ancient literature, when composing in English, will never excel in style. It is but recently that any Americans have begun to practise authorship, as a profession; and, as far as the experiment has been carried, they have no cause to be disheartened. Without being any better versed in Greek and Latin, than formerly, they write English much better, because they pursue the art with more care and constancy; and, should they persevere in it, to the proper extent, as many of them no doubt will, they will equal, in time, the best British writers. Nor will they owe their success to a closer familiarity with the ancient languages; but to a more intimate acquaintance with their native tongue, and a more perfect command of their own powers. It has been already stated, that nothing can be thoroughly understood, without being attentively studied, as a *special subject*. To this may be added, that there are few things which may not be mastered in that way. It is therefore that we earnestly desire to see the English language more strictly cultivated. By that means alone can it ever be written and spoken, in the full perfection, of which it is susceptible; and that course will complete the work. To insure the completion, however, the language must be studied as a *simple tongue*, having a form and genius especially its own; not as a mixture of three other tongues, assimilated to each, yet identified with neither. While cultivated in the latter mode, it will be hybridous and defective. The Greek is accounted the most perfect of languages; and for this, it is no doubt much indebted to its *self-dependent* character. It is not a mixture of several tongues. In their attempts to improve it, therefore, and use it in the most perfect manner, its cultivators had not their attention distracted by collateral and interfering claims. They studied and practised Greek alone, without looking to any higher source. Hence the success of their long-continued effort.

As relates to English, the same would be true. If studied and improved, in a distinct capacity, it would be brought, more certainly than in any other way, to the highest perfection it can ever attain. Hence we would rejoice to see an Institute* established, with a sufficient

* As far as we are informed on the subject, the only *approach* toward an institution of this kind, made in the United States, is the "High School" of Boston. Yet it is *only* an approach. As far, however, as the experiment has been carried, it has been eminently successful, and has opened the most flattering prospect for something more perfect. In that institution, nothing is taught, but the elements of science, and modern languages. Nor are those educated in it intended for what are called the "learned professions." They are designed chiefly to become merchants, mechanics, and English teachers. Notwithstanding this, we are told that when they meet, as they sometimes do, the pupils of Harvard, in any form of intellectual strife, they occupy no inferior ground, but appear to great advantage. No stranger can tell, except, perhaps, from an occasional scrap of Greek or Latin, who is from the "High School," and who from the University. We doubt not that the first fair experiment, of a complete English and scientific education, will be made in New-England, where most of our important improvements begin. And we deem it exceedingly desirable that it be made soon.

number of able professors, and all the necessary means of instruction, where nothing would be taught but modern science and modern language. But they should be taught in perfection. We believe that such an institution would be amply patronized, and would produce in time the happiest effects. The experiment would at least solve the problem, How far a knowledge of Greek and Latin is indispensable as an element of a liberal education ? and the solution would be useful, by settling a controversy, which, without the experiment, threatens to be interminable.

Finally ; were the Greek and Roman nations now in existence, possessed of no more knowledge than they had, during their most enlightened periods, they would be much more benefited, by studying modern languages, for the sake of science, than the moderns are, by studying theirs, for the attainment of words. Such, we feel confident, would be their own opinion ; and their conduct would conform to it. Thus would the current of education be reversed, the less enlightened people being no longer considered a model, for the more enlightened to imitate.

POSTSCRIPT.

It was not until after the preceding numbers were finished, that we had an opportunity to peruse, in the "American Quarterly Register," an article on the "Study of Greek Literature." Notwithstanding the zeal and scholarship, and we may add the fervid eloquence, with which the subject is there treated, our views are unshaken, by any thing the writer has been able to advance. Unfortunately, though he has handled the matter, in his *own way*, with what some people may call ability, it is in *such a way*, as can never elicit any genuine light, and therefore never lead to a satisfactory conclusion. Instead of writing philosophically, he has written rhetorically; and, instead of an analysis, has given a panegyric. He has asserted much, but proved nothing—except by authority—we mean, by the opinion of men, who thought as he thinks, and were, therefore, we apprehend, very partial witnesses. Might we repose entire confidence in all he alleges—and he seems sincere in all—we would be almost induced to believe, that without an acquaintance with "Greek literature," no one could learn even to speak or write in English—certainly that no one could learn to do either with correctness or high effect. But we trust that the reverse has been established, in the body of our article. The main drift of the writer's argument—if argument it may be called—consists in the allegation, that a great majority of the distinguished authors and orators of modern times, have been versed in Greek literature. The truth of this has been already admitted, and a reason assigned for it, which is deemed satisfactory. That somewhat of the character of the paper in the "Register" may be the better known, we shall make a few extracts from it.

"A philosophical knowledge of English is impossible, without acquaintance with a language from which more than fourteen hundred words are immediately derived, and if we trace etymologies through the Latin, nearly forty thousand. It is also impossible to know the compass and depth of English literature, without being scholars in Greek. The revival of classical literature, as if 'coming to create new worlds,' reduced the unformed intellectual waste to order and beauty through all Europe. It was the providence of God that commanded it, and forthwith light

"Sprung from the deep, and, from her native East,
To journey through the airy gloom began."

We shall not offer, on this quotation, all the strictures, to which it is liable. It might be sufficient to remark—and every reader of judgement would concur with us—that it has neither argument nor philosophy in it. It contains nothing but assertion, conveyed in a few flourishes of rhetoric and poetry. This, however, is not its worst fault. It is inaccurate in *fact* or *expression*, or both. Does the writer mean to say, that "forty thousand" English words are derived *immediately* from Latin words, which are again derived *immediately* from Greek? If so, he is mistaken. We profess not to know how many words Rome borrowed from Greece. But the number is far short of forty thousand. The whole catalogue of *original* Greek words—we mean Greek *roots*—does not, we believe, exceed *five or six thousand*. And if such be not our author's meaning, we are unable to detect it, so obscure is his language. The phraseology, to "trace etymologies (of English) through the Latin" (to the Greek) justifies, we think, the construction we put on it.

Admitting, however, that "forty thousand" English words were derived from the Greek through the Latin, the fact would not justify the writer's inference from it. An acquaintance with Greek would not then be *essential* to a "knowledge of the philosophy of English." It would be important in its *etymology*. Strictly speaking, however, the mere *derivation* of a language constitutes no *very material* portion of its *philosophy*; much less the *whole* of it. It makes a part of its *history*, and very little more.* Were the case otherwise, what would become of the philosophy of the Greek language itself, with whose *parent* tongue we have no acquaintance? What of the philosophy of the Hebrew, which some suppose to be the primitive language of man! Must we abandon the study of the philosophy of those two languages, because we are ignorant of their roots? The writer will not say so. Wherefore then is an acquaintance with Greek essential to a "knowledge of the philosophy of English?" It is left to the writer to render an answer, under a conviction that he will not be able to frame a satisfactory one. We fear he has not taken a correct view of what constitutes the philosophy of language. In the compass and multifariousness of philosophical grammar, etymology forms but a very limited point. Another quotation.

"The old English literature, the rich, massy architecture of the true English mind, is all Greek in spirit. In habitual communion with Grecian intellect, the ruling minds of England, in the first era of her true greatness, grew to a majestic intellectual stature. The student of that age finds himself in a sphere, where his emotions are somewhat like those of Brennus and his soldiers, when they advanced into the midst of the hall, around which the venerable priests and senators of Rome, in their robes of state, and white flowing beards, and the sceptre of office in their hands, were seated in silent dignity. Master spirits are around him, their aspect commanding and sublime, their dress heavy with the magnificence of former ages, their movements of godlike majesty, their features shining with the expression of a great indwelling soul."

* A brief examination of the subject can scarcely fail to convince us, that a knowledge of the etymology of English words neither contributes materially to our ready and correct understanding of them, nor facilitates our application of them to their highest and best purposes, in writing and speech. These ends can be attained only by associating and conversing with individuals of education and taste, by consulting our dictionaries, by studying carefully the best English writers, and by frequently exercising ourselves in composition and speaking, always taking care that the language we use be select and accurate. And, by a steady perseverance in this course, we can attain to the highest command of English, as a medium of expression, without studying the languages from which it is derived. That this is true, appears satisfactorily from the following analysis.

The English, as heretofore mentioned, is derived from three other languages, Saxon, its parent stream, and Latin and Greek, in the character of feeders. That a knowledge of the roots of Saxon-English, then, is as necessary as a knowledge of the roots of that which is furnished by Latin and Greek, will not be denied. But that neither is *necessary*, facts innumerable concur to prove.

The following words are of Saxon origin; and no English scholar of the most ordinary education, misunderstands them, or applies them incorrectly, in either writing or speaking. On the contrary, he has as full and perfect a command of them, as the most accomplished Latin, Greek, or Saxon scholar.

Tale, *hand*, *handle*, *finger*, *fang*, *speech*, *snake*, *snail*, *snug*, *crum*, *smut*, *hurt*, *hunger*, *din*, *wake*, *watch*, *grave*, *groove*, *storm*, *day*, *witch*, *wicked*, *field*, *heaven*, *earth*, *if*.

These words, we repeat, no one ever misunderstands, or misapplies. Yet how few are acquainted with their etymology; and how little will any one be benefited, in using them, by being told that they are derived, as follows!

Tale, from—Teilan—to tell.

Hand, from—Hentan—to take hold of.

Handle, from—Handell, a diminutive from the same root.

Finger, from—Fenger, a holder or catcher, which comes again from Fengan—to catch or hold.

Fang, from the same verb, Fengan.

Speech, from—Spece—to speak.

Snake, from—Snican—to creep.

Snail, from—Snegal—a little creeper, which is again from the same verb, Snican.

Snug, from—Snican—to crawl or sneak.

Crum, from—Grymman—to break.

Smut, from—Smytan—to pollute.

Hurt, from—Hyrtian—to injure.

Hunger, from—Hyngrian—to eat.

Din, from—Dynan—to make a noise.

Wake, { from—Wecan—to wake or watch.

Watch, { from—Wecan—to watch.

Grave, { from—Grafan—to dig.

Groove, { from—Grafan—to dig.

Storm, from—Styrmian—to agitate or shake.

Day, from—Dægian—to shine.

Witch, { from—Wiecan—to enchant, or injure by poison or sorcery.

Wicked, { from—Wiecan—to enchant, or injure by poison or sorcery.

Were we inclined to be severe in our animadversions on this extract, we should be justified in using, as respects it, the saw of Napoleon : " From the sublime to the ridiculous is but a single step." We do not say that the writer has taken that step; but, should the reader say or think so, he has our permission to do it. We shall not contradict him. The whole concern, matter, style, and manner, is no bad specimen of one of the ebullitions of a youthful orator, in his maiden speech, on the fourth of July. It is fustian throughout. Is the writer actually enamored of that fashion and style of literary " dress," which is " heavy with the magnificence of former ages?"—in more intelligible words, which is stiff and formal from transposition, and studded all over with classical conceits, and many-colored scraps of Greek and Latin, after the manner of Burton's " Anatomy of Melancholy?" Would the return of that style of writing rejoice him? If so, we envy him not his taste. We had much rather witness, in personal costume, the return of stiff brocades, gaudy stomachers, slash-sleeves, three-cornered hats, bag-wigs, and laced waistcoats and breeches; because we think literary harlequinism worse than that of bodily clothing. As the writer is such an admirer of ancient literature, we wonder that he forgets the caution of the Roman satirist against the *purpureus pannus, verba sesquipedalia*, and other like ornaments. In the literature of the age he so peculiarly delights in, much of this antiquated decoration, intermingled with the quaint conceits of the time, presents itself. We prefer simplicity, ease, and flexibility, in all sorts of dress, mental as well as corporeal; and hence our dislike of starch, buckram, and patch-work. We would as soon see

Field, from—Fellan—to fell or cut down; because the timber is cut down in a field.

Heaven, from—Heofen—to raise, because Heaven is supposed to be on high.

Earth, from—Erith—ploughed; because the earth is a ploughed place.

If or *Gif*, from—Gifan—to give; if signifying give, or grant. Thus, if a thing be so, is tantamount, in meaning, to give or grant that it be so.

Of all words of Saxon-English the same may be affirmed. No English scholar misunderstands or misapplies them; nor is he benefited, in making use of them, by a knowledge of their derivation. An attempt to remember their derivation, when in the act of employing them, would but encumber the memory of a writer or speaker, and impede the operations of his mind.

Of words of Latin-English the same is true. A knowledge of their etymology gives no appreciable facility, in their employment, or in the accurate understanding of them. No tolerable English scholar ever mistakes the meaning or use of the following terms:—

Post, in the ground—military *post*—*post* under government—*post-office*—*post-chaise*—to travel *post*—*post*, for houses—*apposite*, opposite, composite, *impost*, *compost*, *deposit*, *depot*, *repose*, *compose*, *pause*, *position*, *composition*, *deposition*.

Yet but few English scholars know that all these terms and different forms of expression have, as their root, the Latin verb *Pono*, to place. Nor does the Latin scholar pay the least regard to this root, when he is making use of them, in writing or speech. He conforms to *custom*, which, here, and in every other case, is what the poet pronounces it,

Et jus, et norma loquendi—

the law and rule of speech. Again,

Faet, *effet*, *defect*, *perfect*, *prefect*, *fit*, *feat*, *defeat*, *counterfeit*, *forfeit*, *surfeit*, *benefit*, *profit*, and several similar words, come from the Latin root *Facio*. Yet what mere English scholar knows this; or what Latin one troubles himself to think of it, when he is employing the derivative terms? Palpably none. Yet every one understands the terms, and applies them correctly. Once more.

Promise, *compromise*, *committee*, *pretermitt*, *premiss*, *remiss*, *surmise*, *demise*, *mission*, *commission*, *omission*, are all derived from *Mitto*: and *quest*, *inquest*, *request*, *conquest*, *acquest*, *bequest*, *exquisite*, *requisite*, *perquisite*, *question*, and several others, have their origin in *Quaro*. But does the English scholar know all this? Does he sustain any injury, in the exercise of his powers, from not knowing it? or does the Latin scholar always refer to it, when he meets with these terms in reading, or uses them in writing or speaking? To each of these questions, the correct answer is, *No*. Of all Latin-English the same is true. Nor is it less so of Greek-English, as might be easily shown, were it allowable in us, to dwell any longer on the subject. Thus,

Philanthropy, *misanthropy*, *anarchy*, *monarchy*, *hierarchy*, *heptarchy*, *arch-angel*, *arch-bishop*, *arch-deacon*, *archetype*, *oligarchy*, *theocracy*, *aristocracy*, *democracy*, *panorama*, *diorama*, *cosmorama*, *baptize*, are all correctly understood and employed, both by the learned and unlearned, without any reference to their Greek origin.

But, admitting the importance of an acquaintance with the etymology of Latin-and-Greek-English, a much shorter and easier route may be opened to it, than that now pursued. A knowledge of the original Greek and Latin roots is all that is necessary, as a key to what is wanted; and that can be attained in less than a fifth part of the time usually consumed in the study of those languages. Two works are already extant in Great-Britain, which are alone sufficient to communicate the knowledge required. Their titles are, " *The Student's Manual*; being an Etymological and Explanatory Vocabulary of Words derived from the Greek"; and " *An ETYMOLOGICAL AND EXPLANATORY DICTIONARY OF WORDS DERIVED FROM THE LATIN*; being a Sequel to the Student's Manual." Of these, the former is already in its fifth edition, and the latter in its third; a circumstance demonstrative of their usefulness and popularity. By regular exercises on the words they contain, being roots alone, English scholars attain, in a short time, all that is requisite, toward the etymology of their native tongue, so far as it is derived from Greek and Latin.

That these Vocabularies, or others like them, will be extensively adopted, as means of education, can scarcely be doubted; nor do we hesitate to believe, that, in time, even *they* will go out of use, and English dictionaries be so prepared, as to supply their places. And we further believe, that the latter plan will be an important improvement on all preceding ones.

our warriors cased in steel armor, as our English writers in the garb worn by them during the reigns of Elizabeth and her father.

The writer in the "Register" alleges, that, "in the degenerate age of Charles the Second, it was the profound classical scholars of England, who preserved her virtuous literature from extinction." This is true; and the reason of it has been already given. All the educated men of the time were classical scholars; and such only could be the guardians of literature. The writer recites the names of nearly forty individuals, to whom he does homage, as the curators of learning, and adds; "The classical erudition of these men gave them a reach of thought, and a grasp of knowledge, which makes *this age look back on them with wonder.*" This eulogy is extravagant, and speaks only the over-wrought admiration of its author. The personages referred to were highly distinguished. But they were *men*, and no mere to be *wondered at*, either by this age, or any other, than hundreds of individuals, who have flourished at a later period. Besides, no competent judge of the human intellect will contend that it was their "classical erudition," which made them great. Nature formed them to be great, their faculties were strengthened and trained, and their minds enriched with the science of the day, and their attainments in literature, whether ancient or modern, enabled them only to manifest their greatness, in writing and speech. The author's statement to the contrary of this is perfectly gratuitous. Nor, for reasons assigned in the body of this article, is it founded in fact. Language, and the modes of using it, are the *effect* of ideas and thought, not their *cause*. Intellectual views are formed first, and then words are provided to express them. *Ideas* may exist without *speech*. But, were there no ideas, there would be no speech, because there would be neither use nor foundation for it. There would be nothing to speak about. To contend then that mere language enriches, polishes, and strengthens the mind, and confers lustre on those who possess it, is to invert the order of nature. Knowledge, we repeat, is the fountain of speech: not speech of knowledge. "Out of the fulness of the heart, the mouth speaketh." And this is as true of the Greek language, as of any other. Grecian superiority in mental cultivation was not the effect of Grecian literature. It was its cause. The ancient Greeks were much better versed in their own language and literature, than any moderns are. But were they therefore greater? more illustrious, we mean, for the amount, power, and usefulness of their attainments? Far from it. On the contrary, they were greatly inferior. Moderns might be named, whom the Greeks would have deified, on account of their lustre. Franklin, a stranger to the Greek alphabet, was one of them. Of Fulton the same may be safely affirmed. Another quotation will show, with still greater force, the fanatical rhapsody, with which an attempt is made to exalt, above every other mental product, English literature, said to be cast in a Greek mould, and to be instinct with a Greek spirit.

"No other nation possesses any thing to be compared, for its richness, to our English literature of the seventeenth century. It is surprising, that with such materials out of which to build up a strong and symmetrical intellect, the individual as well as general mind of our own age should be comparatively so narrow and misshapen." * * * * "The student" (of the present degenerate day) "does not make himself familiar with the productions of the old English mind: he does not choose his companions, his moral and intellectual friends, out of them. Their contents are imperishable thoughts and principles, not facts merely, and it will not avail to take up a volume, read it cursorily, and then throw it aside to have the attention distracted by the trash upon a modern book-shelf—they must be read and reflected on; they contain not mere knowledge, but wisdom. Their spirit must be taken by habitual communion into the mind, to interpenetrate and imbue it, and become, as it were a part of the intellectual self-consciousness. They should be so studied, as to constitute for the soul an atmosphere of thought, by which it may become invigorated for original action, inhaling it, as it were, unconsciously and freely, like the play of the lungs in the mountain air. In such an atmosphere the mind *grows*, its energies are reused, it feels its own power, and moves like a war-horse on the eve of battle. The feeling of excitement and exultation which powerful thought thus produces, is discipline, discipline of the best kind; and this is the reason why the strongest minds have been the greatest classical enthusiasts."

This paragraph was no doubt intended by its author to be matchless alike in *profundity* and *sublimity*—to be, in matter and diction, like Jupiter Tonans's threatened plunge of any disobedient brother god;

"As far beneath the infernal centre hurled,
As from that centre to the ethereal world."

We give it to the reader as we find it, without guarantying its goodness or badness, truth or falsity; for we profess to know but little about it. It is mostly beyond our comprehension. In plain terms, it is empty bombast—a mere tissue of words, calculated to injure, rather than subserve, any thing attempted to be sustained by it. In the *most* intelligible, if not the *only* intelligible, part of it, the statement it makes is unfounded. It is far from being true, that the “strongest minds have been the greatest classical enthusiasts.” As heretofore intimated, the reverse is much nearer the truth. One quotation more, and adieu to the Hellenist of the “Register.”

After recommending a return to “the study of the ancient Greek classics,” as the only preventive of “modern degeneracy and a depraved taste,” the writer adds, “Unless this be done, erudition will soon become an obsolete term. There is an evident passion to avoid hard study, and obtain every acquisition at the least possible expense of thought. The unparalleled advancement of physical science has contributed to this evil. The study of the physical sciences demands patience and skill in the observation of the external universe, it requires ingenuity in detecting the secret affinities and operations of nature, but it does not turn the mind in upon itself, it does not tend to make a man inwardly *thoughtful*; it has a *contrary tendency*.”

In some respects, this is the most censurable extract we have made. The views it virtually inculcates are hostile alike to the progress of knowledge, and to sound taste. The cultivation of the natural sciences, which our author complains of, as productive of evil, is infinitely useful. It is the study of things, *as God has made them*, and is therefore one of the noblest employments of the mind. That an educated man should condemn it, is matter of surprise. Its object is, to form an acquaintance with nature, *as she is*. And no one will deny that she is, to man, the *immediate oracle of truth*; the true interpreter of the language spoken, and the works performed, by the *Author of truth*. It is, moreover, by the study of nature alone, that the condition of man can be gradually ameliorated; for all improvements, whether in philosophy, or in the arts, which administer to the comforts of life, flow directly from that source. Were the study of nature abandoned, all advancement in knowledge would be at an end; and, as nothing earthly is stationary, the movement of the general condition of society would be retrograde, until barbarism would again usurp the seat of civilization, and the “Dark Ages” return. Yet to this issue does our author’s doctrine tend. And for what would he exchange the study of nature?—The cultivation of Greek literature. He would barter an acquaintance with what nature is doing *now*, for a *dreamy* knowledge—for it can be *only dreamy*, and never *real*—of what the Greeks were doing and thinking, four or five-and-twenty centuries ago! In simple terms, he would give Greek literature a preference to the science and literature of creation; for creation has its language and literature as well as man; and none can read them, but those who cultivate them. Shall we be told that the “Dark Ages” could not return, provided Greek literature were studied, in as much as it once dissipated them? We reply, that the phrase “Dark Ages” is comparative, and relates to a period of *greater light*. And, compared to the present period, the “Dark Ages” continued several centuries after the time of the Revival of Letters. Until the beginning of the seventeenth century, the world had but little more of light, than a morning dawn. Yet Greek literature had been as thoroughly studied, before that period, as it has been since. Besides, it was not Greek literature *alone*, that shed a faint radiance on Christendom, during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. The study of that was accompanied, to a moderate extent, by the study of nature. The light elicited, therefore, was the product of both. Finally, compared to the present state of the world, ancient Greece herself, notwithstanding her language and literature, was overshadowed by “Dark Ages.” Away then with the empty notion, that the cultivation of that literature is the only way to prevent “modern degeneracy!” An exchange of the present condition of Christendom for that of the brightest period of ancient Greece, would be to barter improvement for “degeneracy.”

But our author’s doctrine violates correct taste, as well as sound philosophy. Greek literature is no more the source of poetry than of science. We have Helicons and Hippocreens of our own, sufficient to inspire the votaries of song. Nor does Attica contain the only Parnassus, where Apollo has struck his harp, and the Muses dispensed their favors. To drop these *classical fictions*, and speak in the language of *sober reality*: The modern world possesses thousands of sources much better calculated to awaken and nourish the spirit of poetry, than the writ-

ings of either Homer or Pindar, Sophocles or Euripides—or of all of them united—Virgil, Horace, Ovid, and Lucan being added to the number. Nature is the fountain of poetry, no less than of philosophy; and she never grows old or fades. She is as fresh, and vigorous, and enchanting now, as she was when the “morning stars first sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy.” And she can inspire as glowingly—not to say divinely—and she does so.

America possesses more to inspire the poet, than either Greece or Italy, or any other portion of Europe. We mean that she has native objects, in immeasurable abundance, better calculated to awaken fervid feeling, and swell and elevate the mind with broad and lofty conceptions, fire the imagination and fancy, and give richness and vigor to the powers of invention. Europe has nothing to compare with the solemn majesty of her rivers, lakes, and cataracts, the grandeur of her mountains, the depth and extent of her primeval forests, and the floral seas of her interminable prairies. Nor has she any thing equal to her fine sunny climate, the lofty arch and pellucid azure of her skies, and the gorgeous drapery they receive from the morning and evening clouds. Yet these are among the richest sources and subjects of poetry; all of which our author would neglect, to seek inspiration from Greek literature! Nor are we inferior to the Greeks, in the poetry of human nature. Our passions are as deep and lofty, and our fitness to express them equal to theirs. We have as much heroism, patriotism, and general virtue and power, in the male character, and as much beauty and loveliness, and much more purity and intelligence, in the female. An Apollo, a Venus, an Antinous, or any other god, goddess, or human being, might be sculptured after living models in the United States, and be equal in perfection to those of Greece. We possess, moreover, spectacles of moral and political sublimity, to which the nations of antiquity were strangers.

The modern world is much more familiar than the ancient was, with all that constitutes the poetry of the ocean; and nothing can surpass that in grandeur, whether it be contemplated in the fury of a storm, or the sublimity of a calm. But the source of true mental enlargement, grand conception, and poetic inspiration, which leaves every other immeasurably behind it, is found in astronomy; more especially in the recent discoveries in it. And that belongs exclusively to the moderns. The ancient Greeks were strangers to it. The science of geography, which is also of modern growth, has done much for the expansion of the human mind. And whatever does that is favorable to poetry, in those who possess poetic faculties. Nor must we forget some of the modern works of art, with which the ancients had nothing to compare. How diminutive, in physical grandeur and sublimity, were the land and sea-fights of the Greeks, contrasted with those of the present day, by whose glare even the lightning of heaven is dimmed, and its thunders drowned in their tumultuous uproar! What, compared to com-motions like these, are Homer's conflicts, even in “such wars” as his “Immortals wage?”—Absolutely not more than mice to mammoths! But these are all sources of poetic inspiration and taste. So are all things that tend to expand and elevate the mind, and fan its enthusiasm; and such influences are much more abundant now, than they were during the most splendid periods of Greece and Rome. They belong more especially to modern times. Several of them moreover are connected with the “physical sciences,” which our author condemns, as a source of “evil.” To exchange all these for a few volumes of ancient literature, would be a miserable barter. It would be to prefer the productions of the Grecian pen to the handywork of God! a greater error than which, no degree of infatuation can commit.

Finally; we have already admitted, that there was a time, when a knowledge of the ancient classics was essential to a liberal education. But is that time to be interminable? Is the *minority* of the English language never to have an end? Is the period never to arrive, when that language will be so mature and independent of its parentage, as to be prepared to set up for itself? The warmest advocate for Greek and Latin will pause, before answering this question negatively. We doubt whether any one will so answer it. Within a century from this date, English will be the native tongue of upwards of three hundred millions of the human race. Must that immense population, whose number the mind is unable to grasp, still depend, and, notwithstanding its subsequent boundless increase, still continue to depend, on Greece and Rome, for their intellectual nourishment?—for their literature and their mental discipline? The fancy is preposterous. As well may it be contended, that they will derive from those spots of earth their corporeal food. No; they will have a language of their own, answering to all

their wants, and competent to the manifestation of all their powers. In fact, with the slight restrictions heretofore mentioned, the English and their descendants have such a language now; and the time will arrive, when, to oppose this opinion, will be considered as much the result of antiquated prejudice, as to advocate it now is considered the work of a spirit of innovation. Nor do we hesitate to believe, that, ages hence, when the Greek and Latin languages shall have been neglected and forgotten, English literature, in common with general and professional science, will be in a state of much higher perfection, than it has yet attained. Greek and Latin are destined to become the Sanscrit of future times, known only to the antiquarian and the virtuoso; while English, in an improved condition, will be as lasting as our race.

